

अद्वैतमकरन्दः

# ADVAITA MAKARANDA

## *The Honey of Oneness in Brahman*

---

---

***“THE SANDEEPANY EXPERIENCE”***

---

---

**TEXT**

**26**

Reflections by  
**SWAMI GURUBHAKTANANDA**



## **Sandeepany's Vedanta Course**

**List of All the Course Texts in Chronological Sequence:**

<b>Text No.</b>	<b>TITLE OF TEXT</b>	<b>Text No.</b>	<b>TITLE OF TEXT</b>
1	<i>Sadhana Panchakam</i>	24	<i>Hanuman Chalisa</i>
2	<i>Tattwa Bodha</i>	25	<i>Vakya Vritti</i>
3	<i>Atma Bodha</i>	<b>26</b>	<b><i>Advaita Makaranda</i></b>
4	<i>Bhaja Govindam</i>	27	<i>Kaivalya Upanishad</i>
5	<i>Manisha Panchakam</i>	28	<i>Bhagavad Geeta (Discourse -- )</i>
6	<i>Forgive Me</i>	29	<i>Mundaka Upanishad</i>
7	<i>Upadesha Sara</i>	30	<i>Amritabindu Upanishad</i>
8	<i>Prashna Upanishad</i>	31	<i>Mukunda Mala (Bhakti Text)</i>
9	<i>Dhanyashtakam</i>	32	<i>Tapovan Shatkam</i>
10	<i>Bodha Sara</i>	33	<i>The Mahavakyas, Panchadasi 5</i>
11	<i>Viveka Choodamani</i>	34	<i>Aitareya Upanishad</i>
12	<i>Jnana Sara</i>	35	<i>Narada Bhakti Sutras</i>
13	<i>Drig-Drishya Viveka</i>	36	<i>Taittiriya Upanishad</i>
14	<i>"Tat Twam Asi" – Chand Up 6</i>	37	<i>Jivan Sutrani (Tips for Happy Living)</i>
15	<i>Dhyana Swaroopam</i>	38	<i>Kena Upanishad</i>
16	<i>"Bhoomaiva Sukham" Chand Up 7</i>	39	<i>Aparoksha Anubhuti (Meditation)</i>
17	<i>Manah Shodhanam</i>	40	<i>108 Names of Pujya Gurudev</i>
18	<i>"Nataka Deepa" – Panchadasi 10</i>	41	<i>Mandukya Upanishad</i>
19	<i>Isavasya Upanishad</i>	42	<i>Dakshinamurty Ashtakam</i>
20	<i>Katha Upanishad</i>	43	<i>Shad Darshanaah</i>
21	<i>"Sara Sangrah" – Yoga Vasishtha</i>	44	<i>Brahma Sootras</i>
22	<i>Vedanta Sara</i>	45	<i>Jivanmuktananda Lahari</i>
23	<i>Mahabharata + Geeta Dhyanam</i>	46	<i>Chinmaya Pledge</i>

### **A NOTE ABOUT SANDEEPANY**

**Sandeepany Sadhanalaya** is an institution run by the Chinmaya Mission in Powai, Mumbai, teaching a 2-year Vedanta Course. It has a very balanced daily programme of basic Sanskrit, Vedic chanting, Vedanta study, Bhagavatam, Ramacharitmanas, Bhajans, meditation, sports and fitness exercises, team-building outings, games and drama, celebration of all Hindu festivals, weekly Gayatri Havan and Guru Paduka Pooja, and Karma Yoga activities.

This series is an effort to promote the learning of Vedanta; it does not replace the Course, but hopes to inspire young people to spend two years of their life for an experience that is sure to make a far-reaching spiritual impact on their personal lives. Sandeepany is an all-round spiritual course that gives proper direction to the youth and to those approaching retirement. Hinduism is in dire need of a band of systematically trained teachers or Acharyas who can serve this Eternal Religion.

**– The Author, 24<sup>th</sup> October, 2018, Valmiki Jayanti Day**

Om Namah Shivaaya!

Text  
26



अद्वैतमकरन्दः

## ADVAITA MAKARANDA

*"The Honey of Oneness in Brahman"*

*Composed by Sri Lakshmidhar Kavi (about 1450 AD)*

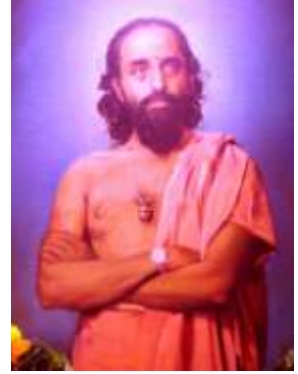
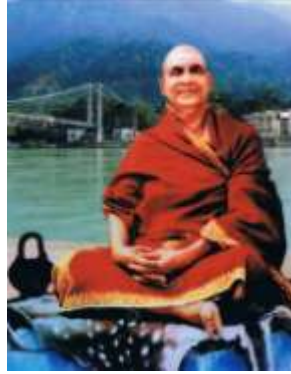
*Bhashya by Sri Swayamprakash Yati (1626 – 1704 AD)*

### Reflections

*by Swami Gurubhaktananda*

*on the Series of 35 Lectures by Swami Advaitanandaji  
Director-Acharyaji, held at Chinmaya Vibhooti, Kolwan, near Pune  
for the 15<sup>th</sup> Batch Sandeepany Vedanta Course*

**November 4th – November 21st, 2012**



Adi Shankaracharya

Swami Sivananda

Swami Tapovanji

Swami Chinmayananda

**SERVE • LOVE • GIVE • PURIFY • MEDITATE • REALISE**



## **Copyright & Author's Details**

### **Author:**

*Swami Gurubhaktananda* (ex Krishna Chaitanya, born Bipin R. Kapitan in Durban, South Africa)

Email: [gurubhakta.dls@gmail.com](mailto:gurubhakta.dls@gmail.com)

© 2018 All Rights Reserved. Copyright held by Swami Gurubhaktananda.

### **About This Edition:**

Web Edition:	24 <sup>th</sup> October, 2018, Maharishi Valmiki Jayanti Day
Website:	Chinmaya International Foundation: <a href="http://www.chinfo.org">www.chinfo.org</a>
Series Title :	<b>The Sandeepany Experience</b>
Series Subject:	Vedanta & Supportive Subsidiary Texts

**Declaration by the Author:** *The material in this series is under inspiration of the Sandeepany Vedanta Course, but largely consists of the Author's reflections on the Course. He is deeply indebted to the Chinmaya Mission for its excellent presentation of the Course by their renowned and dedicated Acharyas.*

---

## **Personal Dedication**

### **1. To my Parents, Smt Sharadaben & Sri Ratilalbhai Kapitan**

*who inspired me to study in life, to stick to the path of Dharma and pursue the highest ideals; and swamped me with their abundant Love;*

### **2. To Pujya Sri Swami Vimalanandaji Maharaj**

*the President of the Divine Life Society of Rishikesh, Uttarakhand, India, who constantly encouraged and supported this effort;*

### **3. To Pujya Sri Swami Tejomayanandaji (Guruji)**

*for his boundless vision and inspiration to create a vibrant organisation;*

### **4. To Sri Swami Advayanandaji and Sri Swami Sharadanandaji**

*my Acharyaji and Upa-Acharyaji at Sandeepany, who imparted their bountiful knowledge and wisdom with rare selfless Divine Love, just as the Rishis of yore would wish to see them do.*

---

\*\*\*\*\*

# ***ADVAITA MAKARANDA***

***“The Honey of Oneness”***

---



**ADVAITA MAKARANDA**  
*“The Honey of Oneness in Brahman”*

## **CONTENTS:**

---

	<i>Invocatory Verses by Swayamprakasha Yati</i>	3
	<i>Introduction</i>	5
	<i>The Central Purpose</i>	6
<b><u>1. THE PRELIMINARIES</u></b>		
Verse 1:	<i>The Mangalacharan – Prayer to Lord Krishna</i>	7
Verse 2:	<i>I am Satchidananda – Brahman Alone</i>	8
<b><u>2. THE NATURE OF BRAHMAN</u></b>		
Verse 3:	<i>I am the All-Knowing Cause of All</i>	10
Verse 4:	<i>The Three Methods of Destruction</i>	12
Verse 5:	<i>Destruction by External Means</i>	14
Verse 6:	<i>Vedanta’s Theory of Perception</i>	15
<b><u>3. SUPERIMPOSITION OF WORLD</u></b>		
Verse 7:	<i>4-Step Logic From Duality to Non-Duality</i>	17
Verse 8:	<i>The ‘My’-Thought and ‘This’-Thought</i>	19
<b><u>4. WHO IS MR. EGO?</u></b>		
Verse 9:	<i>Self Equated to Ego?</i>	21
Verse 10:	<i>Is the Self the Samsari?</i>	22
Verse 11:	<i>The Three States Belong to Ego</i>	23
Verse 12:	<i>Knowledge in the Three States</i>	25
<b><u>5. MODIFICATIONS ARE UNREAL</u></b>		
Verse 13:	<i>Free From All Modifications</i>	27
Verse 14:	<i>Can the Changing Remember the Change?</i>	27
Verse 15:	<i>Birth &amp; Death Defined Under Non-Existence</i>	30
<b><u>6. IGNORANCE CAUSES SAMSAARA</u></b>		
Verse 16:	<i>Is Ignorance Real?</i>	32
Verse 17:	<i>The Thick Mist of Ignorance</i>	33
Verse 18:	<i>The World Dream</i>	35
<b><u>7. DEALING WITH DIVERSITY</u></b>		
Verse 19:	<i>Unity in Diversity</i>	37

Verse 20:	<i>Witness-hood is Only a Pointer</i>	38
Verse 21:	<i>Unaffected by the Unreal</i>	39

## **8. BRAHMAN IS “SATCHIDANANDA”**

Verse 22:	<i>Existence is My Very Nature</i>	41
Verse 23:	<i>Consciousness is My Very Nature</i>	42
Verse 24:	<i>Bliss is Myself</i>	44

## **9. “TAT TWAM ASI” ANALYSIS**

Verse 25:	<i>The Method of Interpreting “Tat Twam Asi”</i>	47
Verse 26:	<i>The Implied Meaning of “Tat”</i>	50
Verse 27:	<i>Negation of Direct Meanings</i>	51

## **10. CONCLUSION**

Verse 28:	<i>The Nectar of Advaita</i>	54
	<i>Six Additional verses</i>	55
	<i>Pratijnas (Hypotheses) in the Text – A Summary</i>	56-58

\*\*\*\*\*



***The Nectar of Flowers***  
*Produces the “Honey of Wisdom”.*



**ADVAITA MAKARANDA**  
“The Honey of Oneness in Brahman”

**FIVE INVOCATORY VERSES**

By Sri Swayamprakash Yati

**“Profile of VEDANTIC SADHANA”**

नित्यं निरन्तरानन्दं चिद्धनं ब्रह्म निर्भयम् ।  
श्रुत्या तर्कानुभूतिभ्यामहमस्म्यद्वयं सदा ॥१॥

**1. nityam nirantaraanandam, chiddhanam brahma nirbhayam;  
shrutwaa tarka-anubhootibhyaam, aham-asy-advayam sadaa.**

**Vastu Niradesh Mangalam:** Brahman is Sat (Nityam), Ananda (Nirantara) and Chit (Chiddhanam) – i.e. Satchidananda – who makes us fearless. How do we know Him? By listening to the Srutis, by logic, and by experience, I become aware that I am non-dual always.

अम्बागृहीतवामार्धं वन्दे चन्द्रकलाधरम् ।  
लावण्यमधुराकारं कारुण्यरसवारिधिम् ॥२॥

**2. amba-griheetavaamaardham, vande chandrakalaadharam;  
laavanya madhuraakaaram, kaarunya-rasa-vaaridhim.**

**Salutation to Lord Shiva:** I salute Him who has Parvati on His left half (Ardha-angeeshwari form) and the 1/16<sup>th</sup> crescent moon on His head (Lord Shiva); He is charming, has a beautiful form and is an ocean of compassion.

कैवल्यानन्दयोगीन्द्रपादपङ्कजरजोर्विः ।  
राजते मे हृदाकाशे मोहध्वान्तनिवर्तकः ॥३॥

**3. kaivalyaananda yogeendra, paadakanjara-joravih;  
raajatam me hridaakaashe, mohadvaanta-nivartakah.**

**Salutation to my Guru:** I am always at the feet of my Guru Kaivalyananda, the dust of whose feet are like the sun to me. He shines in my heart space. He is the remover of all delusion.

शुद्धानन्दपदाम्भोजद्वन्द्वं सेवे यदुद्भवम् ।  
निर्वाणरसमास्वाद्य हृष्टः शिष्यालिपङ्कयः ॥४॥

**4. shuddhaananda padaambhoja, dwandwam seve yad udbhavam;  
nirvaana-rasam-aakhvaadya, hrishtaah shishyaa-lipanktayah.**

**To my Guru Shuddhananda:** I salute his holy feet from which is produced the honey of Nirvana, tasting which makes all his many disciples happy and liberated.

सच्चिदानन्दयोगीन्द्रा जयन्ति भुवि केचन ।

यत्कृपालवतस्तीर्णो मया संसारवारिधिः

॥५॥

**5. satchidaananda yogeendrap, jayanti bhuvi kechana;  
yat kripaa lavata-s teerno, mayaa samsaara-vaaridhih.**

**To my Guru Satchidananda:** I salute this Lord of Yogis, by a little of whose Grace one victoriously crosses over this world which is like the ocean of Samsara.

---

## **BHASHYA ON INVOCATORY VERSES:**

**(Basic Profile of Vedantic Sadhana)**

Here indeed is a great Kavi (poet or saintly, learned scholar).

He trains his disciples to engage in approved [Karmas](#) such as Nitya, Naimitika and Prayaschita Karmas, as well as [Upasanas](#) such as Vedic rituals. Through such practices, they become purified at heart. From that arises the desire to practise [Sadhana Chatushtaya](#) and develop discrimination, dispassion, the sixfold virtues and the intense desire for liberation.

Then when they are ready, they give these up, even the rituals, and turn to a God-realised Guru – [Guru Upasadana](#) - to lead them further. They hear the Vedas from him and study the science of Vedanta, i.e. the [Sravana](#) is done.

However, they still have some doubts which block their furtherance in knowledge like barriers or obstacles. Thus, not being fully satisfied, even though they are loaded with the burden of Vedantic knowledge, they approach the Guru for help. Filled with compassion for them, the Guru wishes to do something for them.

The Guru explains to them with crystal-like clarity the true meaning of Brahman, who is Satchidananda, all-knowing, all-pervading, eternal, reaching out everywhere and non-dual. Then he also makes them understand that Brahman is the witness of their senses and Prana and that He is also the witness of their mind, intellect and ego sense. He, the Supreme Brahman, is also not different from their inner Being, that He is their very own Self.

Through such thorough Self-enquiry and by the study of this small text called “**Advaita Makaranda**” – which jointly comprise [MANANA](#) – he makes them understand that it is possible to realize Him as such.

This text prepares seekers for the stage of [Nididhyasana](#). Hence, I have undertaken to write a detailed Bhashya on it and hence I seek the blessing and grace of the Lord and my Guru to accomplish this undertaking successfully. For this reason I am attaching this Mangalacharan to this text.

---

\*\*\*\*\*



# ॥ अद्वैतमकरन्दः ॥

श्रीलक्ष्मीधरकविविरचितः  
स्वयंप्रकाशकृतटीकासहितः

## ADVAITA MAKARANDA

28 Verses by Sri Lakshmidhara Kavi  
with Bhashya by Sri Swayamprakash Yati

“The Honey of ONENESS in Brahman”

**Note:** Regarding the class notes presented in these pages they consist largely of translations of the Bhashya written by Sri Swayamprakash Yati. His textbook is entirely in Samskrit. We did not have an English translation available for study. Hence, Acharyaji took great pains to translate the Bhashya word by word, followed by the import of the sentences in English. It is these notes that are presented here.

A small amount of material has also been taken from Pujya Guruji's commentary on this book, which formed part of our study material.

---

## INTRODUCTION

**SRI LAKSHMIDHARA KAVI**, the author, was a poet in the royal court of King Bhoja, Jagannath Puri. ‘Kavi’ means poet as well as a learned person. Indeed he was also a learned scholar of no mean reputation, having written 3 major works: the *Amrita Tarangini* (notes on Srimad Bhagavata), *Bhagavan Nama Kaumudi* on the greatness and sanctity of the Lord's Name, and the present book, *Advaita Makaranda*.

**Advaita** means “non-dual”; **Makaranda** means “honey”, nectar of sweetness. The name immediately conjures up a picture of a garden of flowers with humming honey bees coming to take away the inner nectar lying deep in the flowers. The operation is most delicate – the bees of disciples alight softly on the petals of scriptural texts and without doing any damage take away the sweet nectar of knowledge back to their Guru's ‘honey-comb’. Only the sincere and hard-working student gets to enjoy the honey of Vedanta.

All Vedantic texts are flowers. Among the sweetest of messages coming out from them is the message of Oneness or universality of God. *Advaita Makaranda* is the sweetest honey obtained from the flowers of Vedantic knowledge.

---

# **THE CENTRAL PURPOSE**

## ***MANANA – the Removal of Doubts***

**T**HIS BOOK IS INTENDED as Manana for the fairly advanced type of Sadhaka. To one who has intellectual doubts still lingering in his mind, logic and reasoning are needed. This is what this entire text provides – a sound logical foundation to clear the seeker’s doubts.

Lecture two was devoted entirely to explaining the central purpose of *Advaita Makaranda*, namely, the removal of ***Prameya Asambhavana*** – the doubts which pertain to the knowledge one hears during Sravana from the Master. The terms relevant here are:

- i) **Pramaana** – the means of knowledge;
- ii) **Prameya** – that which is to be known, or the object of knowledge;
- iii) **Pramaata** – the knower, the seeker of Truth, or the subject of knowledge.

The Pramana and Prameya are not areas that introduce doubt. They have been tested through time and found to work successfully. The scriptures contain these within them. It is the Pramata, the seeker, who is the variable among these three. All doubts that arise regarding knowledge are firmly due to the mind of the knower.

Wrong understanding is called ***Vipariya***. It gives rise to misunderstanding and erroneous notions, called ***Viparita Bhavana***. In the wake of Vipariya there arise many doubts in the seeker’s mind.

Acharyaji gave the example of the moon in the sky and the moon reflected in the water. They appear as two moons, the first being the one in the sky. The reflected moon is entirely dependent on the moon in the sky; it has no separate existence of its own. This is how the individual soul or Jiva is related to Brahman. Brahman is the ‘moon in the sky’, and Jiva is the ‘moon reflected in water’. Brahman puts on some make-up and appears as Jiva!

In order to remove this specific type of doubt that comes as an obstacle within one’s intellect, it does not help very much to give similes, nor does it help very much to quote an authority like the scriptures. The doubt has to be cleared at the intellectual level, using first principles and bringing to bear the power of sound logic alone. This is what is attempted in the present text.

There are other highly recognized texts like the *Yoga Vasishtha* and *Ashtavakra Gita* which have a totally different style. They are meant for a different Adhikari on the spiritual path. They avoid logic and go straight into an assertion of the existence of Brahman. The point we note here is that there are texts to suit different types of seekers. All texts have validity for the category of seekers they are trying to reach. The texts, therefore, should not be compared for the purpose of criticizing one against another.

There are also texts which go very strong on the theme of devotion or Bhakti, within the field of Vedanta. These also are aimed at a particular kind of seeker or Adhikari. There is a breadth within Hinduism which allows for all shades of aspirants to be catered for, each in its own unique category.

This is the great strength of Hinduism, not its weakness.

---

\*\*\*\*\*

# 1. THE PRELIMINARIES

(Verses 1-2, 2no.)

**Verse 1:** *The Mangalacharan – Prayer to Lord Krishna*

कटाक्षकिरणाचान्तनमन्मोहाब्धये नमः ।

अनन्तानन्दकृष्णाय जगन्मङ्गलमूर्तये

॥ १॥

1	<i>kataaksha kirana aachaanta,</i>	<i>Who by a mere beam of His side-glance dries up</i>
2	<i>naman-moha abdhaye namah;</i>	<i>the <u>ocean of delusion</u> of those who surrender to Him. I offer my salutations</i>
3	<i>ananta aananda krishnaaya,</i>	<i>to that <b>Lord Sri Krishna</b> who is Infinite Bliss,</i>
4	<i>jagan-mangala moortaye.</i>	<i>whose Form is <u>auspicious</u> to the whole world.</i>

**1** By the Grace of Guru and Parameshwara are we able to tread this rigorous path of spirituality. The loving Grace of the Guru is described poetically as a ‘side-glance’ of his eye upon the disciple.

**2 Moha Abdhaya:** The Guru enables us to cross to the other side of the “*ocean of Delusion*”. Why is Delusion called an *ocean*? There are three reasons:

i) It is difficult to cross over, like an ocean. We hear of people swimming across the sea to the rock memorial at Kanya Kumari; some have even swam across the English Channel; but we never hear of anyone swimming across the Atlantic or Pacific Ocean. Crossing Samsara is like swimming across such an ocean.

ii) There are hurdles of many waves continuously tossing one up and down.

iii) There are many sharks in the ocean simply waiting to swallow us up. There are whales which swallow little fish. Some of these fish escape out of the mouths of the whales, but no sooner they do so, they are swallowed by another whale! There is no escape from such dangers.

For these reasons the Bhashya fully justifies the description of Samsara or delusion as an ocean that is hard to cross.

**3** Sri Lakshmidhar Kavi’s Guru was Swami Anantananda. This line could therefore be taken to mean a salutation to his Guru.

**Anantananda:** also means “the Eternal Bliss”, which radiates from Lord Krishna, the author’s Ishtha Devata. Bliss is described in some detail in the Bhashya. The main attribute of this Bliss is that it is our very nature, and is not dependent on any external factor. It is also one of the main incentives to tread the spiritual path, standing for the ever-steady Happiness beyond all relativity.

**4 Mangala:** “*Auspiciousness*”. A text which bestows upon us the capacity to destroy all obstacles in this world and the next is certainly auspicious. Auspiciousness is of this nature only. If it did not do this, then it would not be worth its name. So says the Bhashya.

**Verse 2: “Brahman Alone Am I”**

अहमस्मि सदा भामि कदाचिन्नाहमप्रियः ।

ब्रह्मैवाऽहमतः सिद्धं सच्चिदानन्दलक्षणम् ॥ २॥

1	<i>aham asmi sadaa bhaami,</i>	<i>I ever exist; always do I shine;</i>
2	<i>kadaachit na aham apriyah;</i>	<i>I am never disagreeable to Myself;</i>
3	<i>brahma iva aham atah siddham,</i>	<i>thus it is established, “Brahman alone am I” –</i>
4	<i>sachidaananda lakshanam.</i>	<i>of the nature of <u>Existence-Consciousness-Bliss</u>.</i>

In introducing this verse, the Bhashya highlights the main point of the whole text, which is to establish that:

***The inner Self of man is the same as Brahman, the Supreme Being, whose nature is Sat-Chit-Ananda, and who is Non-dual or One without a second (Advaita).***

---

**1** Brahman is the substratum upon which the ego, etc, rest. He is Existence itself. He gives reality to all other things that are superimposed upon Him.

**2 “Never do I dislike myself”:** This is greatly expanded in the Bhashya. Love for oneself forms the start. From it comes love for others whom one likes or who like one. The same is the case of one’s hatred or enmity – these are directed to those whom one does not like and towards those who do not like one.

This is then extended to include the Ananda felt by one when one has what he likes. When one is with those whom he likes, he feels happiness. Thus Love, Joy and the Object of love are connected to each other. These form a sort of “Love Triangle”. In the same way the opposite is true – of the triangular relationship between Hate, Sorrow and the Object of hatred, which form the “Hate Triangle”. This sets up the warp and woof of Samsaric life – and it all starts because of the love for oneself.

**3-4 The Divine Nature:** This is also described at some length. In essence we are all pure Existence, Consciousness and Bliss. We are Satchidananda Brahman. We are equated with Brahman purely on the strength of having the same essential characteristics. No consideration for magnitude enters the picture, since Brahman has no parts. The limitations of size are not a quality that belongs to Brahman.

**Several Objections Are Raised:**

The author of the Bhashya poses several objections and then, in his answers he brings out the logical explanations for the Vedantic view. This applies to all verses. Objections are posed from the Poorvapakshi. This is a standard procedure in this text.

**Objection 1:** *How can I be Ishwara? I cannot perceive Him with my senses or mind; so how can I be equated to Him?*

This objection is answered by saying that the senses are not the Pramana or means of knowledge to prove the existence of Ishwara or Brahman. It is not the realm of the senses to draw information about these, which are beyond their limited range of functioning.



**Objection 2:** *I am a limited being, and Ishwara is so mighty and vast – how can I be equal to Him?*

This is also answered in terms of logic. It is illogical to say that a relation cannot exist between two things because of the difference in their magnitude. For instance in space, which is the support for sound, there can be vulgar music as well as sweet classical music. These two opposites have their substratum in the same space. We do not say that one excludes the other. Both can co-exist in the same space.

Similarly, the Bimba and Pratibimba are very different from each other, yet the Pratibimba cannot exist without the Bimba. They are also interdependent.

**Objection 3:** At times the objector can be devious. He quotes the first part of a Sruti build-up of logic and ignores the development of the argument. He quotes a temporary standpoint, say from that of the mind or intellect, which says, “I am not Brahman”. However, the same Srutis say later that when the Upadhis are dropped, there is complete equality with Brahman. This latter conclusion is conveniently ignored by the objector!

---

\*\*\*\*\*



## 2. THE NATURE OF BRAHMAN

(verses 3-6, 4 no.)

THIS SECTION OF FOUR verses gives more depth to the main Subject of this text – the Supreme Brahman. That which is “indescribable” is being attempted by Sri Lakshmidhar Kavi to inspire us and to prepare our minds to receive the text.

**Verse 3:** *I am the All-Knowing Cause of All*

मय्येवोदेति चिद्व्योम्नि जगद्गन्धर्वपत्तनम् ।  
अतोऽहं न कथं ब्रह्म सर्वज्ञं सर्वकारणम् ॥ ३॥

1	<i>mayi eva udeti chit-vyomni,</i>	<i>In Me alone, the Consciousness of Space, arises</i>
2	<i>jagat gandharva pattanam;</i>	<i>the world, like the castle-in-the-sky;</i>
3	<i>atah aham na katham brahma,</i>	<i>therefore, how can I not be Brahman,</i>
4	<i>sarva-jnam sarva-kaaranam.</i>	<i>the omniscient and the Cause of all?</i>

**1** The statement “*I am the Cause of the world*” hinges on the standpoint that ‘I am not the body and mind complex.’ The standpoint by which “I am Consciousness Itself” is taken to prove this. The argument is quite interesting:

**Who is the Knower of the World?** Again one object cannot know another, as both are inert. This compels us to conclude that only a conscious entity can know a thing. This leads to the conclusion that “I”, i.e. I in my identity as Consciousness, am the Knower.

Thus I as Consciousness am the Cause and the Knower of the world. This is the essence of this verse.

**2 The Castle in the Sky:** Since the world is an appearance only (see **4**), its existence depending entirely on a frail thing called ignorance. It is viewed in Vedanta in the same light as a dream is in comparison to the waking state. Another example is of the water in a mirage. The appearance of water is certainly there, but there is not a drop of it present. The Bhashya elaborates further on the dreamlike quality of the waking state.

Our main problem is that we cannot accept the waking state as being just a dream. Its reality is too solid for us to relegate it as being unreal. With more and more Vedantic Mananam, this doubt can be removed and the truth of the waking state becomes more acceptable as we progress in our meditation.

**3 How Can I not be Brahman?** An objector says, “You say you are Brahman, as declared in the *Mundaka Upanishad* that Brahman is the general as well as particular cause of the universe. Are you the same? You don’t even know what is inside your own body! You do not know everything about your heart, lungs and liver. How can you then be the all-knower in this world?”

**The ‘Seer’ Never On Par With the ‘Seen’:** The Bhashya makes this argument a key one in explaining the unreality of the world. It traces the ultimate Seer to Consciousness, and the ultimate ‘seen’ to the subtle state of being a witness of one’s mind. There is nothing subtler than Pure Consciousness. This brings us to the conclusion that Consciousness is the substratum of the world. *Drg Drishya Viveka*, studied earlier (Text 13), elaborates further on this argument.

The following gradation was given by Acharyaji to help us understand the hierarchy within the realm of ‘Creation’:

i) **Bhoota Akasha** – the element of space; which is the substratum (Adhara) for objects of this world.

ii) **Chitta Akasha** – the mind space; which is the substratum for all thoughts; in a sense, the world objects exist in the mind as numerous thoughts only.

iii) **Chid Akasha** – the subtlest of all entities, namely, the Space of Consciousness; which is the substratum for the mind itself. It is the ultimate substratum, upon which everything else is superimposed. This Consciousness is Brahman.

**4 Who is the Cause of this World?** The world is an object, and referred to as ‘this’. What is the cause of ‘this’?

i) The Shunya Vadins say it comes from Nothing. This does not stand the test of logic, as from nothing only nothing can come.

ii) The Scientists look for an answer in the midst of the objects of the world – in the atom, etc. One object cannot be the cause of another object, as both are inert.

iii) The Vedantins say Consciousness is the cause. Here there are two options:

iii a) Can Consciousness be the cause as milk is the cause of curds? This will mean that Consciousness itself is being seen as an object, so this option fails on logical grounds.

iii b) The only other accepted cause of the world is that it is a *superimposition* on Consciousness, like a snake on a rope. This is the Vedantic viewpoint.

Consciousness is not seen as a Creator, but as the substratum of what we call creation. For this reason, Vedantins do not use the word ‘Creation’ but prefer the term ‘Appearance’ – the world is an **appearance** based upon ignorance of the true substratum. Once the substratum is known, then the world’s true perspective is discovered. The world is known to be relatively real.

This is the basis for saying “I am the cause of the world”. This appearance is possible due to delusion, which is seated in the mind. This world ultimately is seen only by our mind. In its ignorance, the mind gives it a solid reality, but when enlightened it recognizes the world’s true nature as being only an appearance.

### **Objections:**

We briefly summarise the two objections that are discussed in the Bhashya.

i) **Unseen, Distant Objects:** An objector says: “You may be the knower and cause of what you see. But how can you also be that for things unseen by you?”

The reply to this is that even things unseen are also ‘known’ in a negative way. As soon as Mt Meru (example of a distant object) is mentioned, I start imagining it. Not

knowing a thing is also one way of knowing it. Does it make any difference to Mt Meru whether I have seen it or not? In either case, the superimposition of the object is in my mind only. My senses may not know it, but that matters little. What matters is that the Self knows it – and the Self is everywhere, it is not limited to just my body or my mind. Even if I do not know Mt Meru, it does not define me as an ‘Alpa-jnya’, i.e. a knower of a little. I am only an Alpa-jnya if I accept a limited mind and limited body (‘my’ mind and body). The inner Self is also the substratum of Mt Meru, and so it is its cause and knower. Since I am one with the Self, I can say that I am the knower and cause even of things unseen by ‘the little me’, but seen by the Real ‘Me’, which is the Self.

ii) **Nitya:** The objector says, “Brahman is Nitya or eternal. Are you also the same? An individual is subject to death – that is its nature. This is the experience of all.” He quotes this statement from the *Mundaka Upanishad*.

Acharyaji jokingly told us of a life-saving drug on the market – it had an expiry date stamped on it!

There are three ways of being destroyed, i.e. of being non-eternal, Anitya. These are taken up immediately in the next verse....

**Verse 4:      *The Three Methods of Destruction***

न स्वतः प्रत्यभिज्ञानान्निरंशत्वान्न चान्यतः ।  
न चाश्रयविनाशान्मे विनाशः स्यादनाश्रयात्      ॥ ४॥

1	<i>na svatah prati-abhijnaanaat,</i>	<i>i) I cannot perish by myself, since there is continuous memory;</i>
2	<i>niramshatvaat na cha anyatah;</i>	<i>ii) Nor by someone else, because I am partless</i>
3	<i>na cha aashraya vinaashaat me,</i>	<i>iii) Not even due to destruction of my support,</i>
4	<i>vinaashah syaad anaashrayaat.</i>	<i>can there be my destruction, for I am not dependent on any support.</i>

The verse spells out the three methods by which a thing becomes Anitya, i.e. it is said to be perishable. Each of these methods gives us occasion to illustrate a prime point of Vedanta. Hence, the Bhashya takes each of these up in great detail:

i) **Prati-Abhijnaanaat:** Because of My continuous memory, I cannot be destroyed by Myself.

ii) **Niramshatvaat:** Because of having no parts, others cannot destroy Me.

iii) **Anaashrayaat:** Because I am not dependent on any substratum, there is no possibility of destroying Me by taking away My support.

The detailed explanation for each of these is given:

**1 i) Prati-Abhijnaanam:** By definition, this is recollection of a previous experience after a lapse of time. This is a Pramana (accepted means of knowing) to confirm that it is the same person that is still existing. Note that forgetfulness of an experience does not prove that it did not happen, but remembrance is certain proof that it did.

The example of a child who has now grown into an old man is given. When he sees his grandchildren playing with him, he recounts the time in his own childhood when he played with his grand-parents. It is the same person that is recalled. This proves his continuous existence. Another example is of a man getting up from *dream or sleep*. He is certain that he is the same person that went to sleep earlier.

This may appear trivial to us, but philosophically it is very significant. The Buddhists, long after the Buddha's departure, formulated a system where they held that one dies from moment to moment. They said, one is not the same person as a moment ago. If this were true, it would make life literally impossible. There would be no recollection of the past, as it would always be 'another person' who experienced it. This teaching is probably the corruption of a truth – that the body changes from moment to moment, and that can be extended to the mind with respect to thoughts, which change from moment to moment. But the Self is not such a changeable entity. It is uniformly constant forever, even beyond the limits set by birth and death.

**2 ii) Niramshatvam:** This poses the possibility of being destroyed by an external agency. An external agent would have access only to one's body – at most it may be argued that it has access to one's mind. Examples of this are physical and mental torture to the point of death. Does this prove the Self's destruction? The argument here says it does not.

The logic is that the Self has no parts. Strike a sword through space and see what happens. Only one's arm gets sore, nothing else is destroyed. The Self is even more subtle than space. How can it be touched, even in part, by an outer agent?

The nature of Atman as awareness or pure consciousness makes it impossible for it to be destroyed by an external object. The question may be turned to ask, "Why does Consciousness not have form, i.e. parts? If it did it could be of two types – sentient parts or insentient parts. In the former case, all the parts would be sentient, which leads to the flaw that these parts may independently desire to do different things. If they quarrel with each other, the body will certainly be confused!

And suppose that the parts are insentient: then the sum of all the parts would also be inert, making the Atman inert – an illogical outcome. Threads are inert; when weaved into cloth, the cloth also will be inert. Hence, the Atman has to be formless, and cannot be destroyed by a form.

**3-4 iii) Anaashrayam:** This is defined as a substratum or support. A painting on a canvas gets destroyed when the canvas is burnt because it was supported by the canvas, its substratum. A political party dies off when it loses the support of its voters. Can the Self also be destroyed in the same way? This also is impossible, because the Self, being the ultimate substratum of the entire universe, can have no substratum for Itself, by definition. It is independent of any support.

From the *Kena Upanishad* comes the example of the Self being Nishkriya, Nirguna, Nirjaati, Nirbhavya, etc., meaning without action, without qualities, without a category, etc. This is due to it being non-dual – there is no other to challenge it. It is that which exists at the Absolute level.

Thus it is proved that the Self or Atman cannot be destroyed in any of the above three ways.

**Verse 5: Destruction By External Means**

न शोषप्लोषविक्लेदच्छेदाश्चिन्नभसो मम ।

सत्यैरप्यनिलाग्न्यम्भः शस्त्रैः किमुत कल्पितैः ॥ ५॥

1	<i>na shosha-plosha-vikleda cha,</i>	<i>There can be no drying, burning, wetting, or</i>
2	<i>chhedaah chin-nabhasah mama;</i>	<i>cutting of Me, the Pure Consciousness:</i>
3	<i>satyaiah api anila, agni, ambhah,</i>	<i>If not by so-called 'real' wind, fire and water</i>
4	<i>shastraih, kim uta kalpitaih.</i>	<i>weapons, then how by these that are imaginary!</i>

Among the three methods of destruction given in the previous verse, the second one is taken up here in greater detail. This method was discussed in verse 4 from the standpoint of the “destroyed” (space; the Self), the reason being It is without parts. Now we view the method from the standpoint of the “destroyer”, i.e. the object used for the destruction.

Firstly, the Bhashya classifies these objects into two categories:

i) **Natural Causes:** such as burning (fire), floods (water), and hurricanes (air);

ii) **Unnatural Causes:** here some sort of a weapon (earth) needs to be used. Weapon represents the earth element.

**1-2** To begin with, the statement of fact is laid out in the first half of the verse. In lines reminiscent of the *Bhagavad Geeta*, 2.23, the same words are placed in the First Person of the Self: the indestructibility of the Self is made more emphatic when it is stated by the Self; and it adds a bit of humour to the lines:

Would not the Self have witnessed many attempts among men to ‘slay’ Him out of existence? Every such attempt has failed dismally. The Self has always had the last laugh – no one has succeeded in killing Him. We are reminded of others who could not be killed because of boons bestowed upon them by some Deity or other, pleased with their austerity. When a Raakshasa with such a boon survives attempts to kill him, he lets out a haughty laugh. How does that compare with the Self? Is the Self being haughty here? Who has given Him the boon of being indestructible? And for what austerity of His? All these curiosities are aroused in jest in the mind of the pure seeker upon reading these two lines.

**The Logic of the Self’s Indestructibility:**

**3-4** In the second part of the verse, we see an impeccable piece of logic presented by the imaginative Sri Lakshmidhar Kavi. The flash of wit is so sudden and profound that the words cannot keep the pace of the thought, and many words have to be added by us to convey the full meaning!

In the simile used, Space is the target of destruction by the other four elements, probably due to some conspiracy among them. We see that all four elements attempt the assassination and fail. At this the Self has a hearty laugh! “If they cannot kill one of their own kind, namely Space, how on earth are they going to succeed to kill Me who is a million times more subtle than Space!”

Acharyaji told us that the expansion of this discussion in the Bhashya is like a “*Ready-made Mananam*”. We have to think deeply about the logic presented there. Such reflection is a Sadhana in itself. Hence, the Bhashya itself is quoted here:

First, space is used as the closest simile for the Self, the all-pervading Consciousness. Space symbolizes the Self. Not by air can it (space) be dried; not by fire can it be burnt; not



by water can it be wetted; and not by weapons (earth) can it be cut apart. In the same way, the Atman, which is partless, cannot be destroyed.

The argument is that if these cannot destroy a thing that has the same level of reality as themselves, i.e. the Vyavaharic or phenomenal reality, then how is it ever possible for them to destroy something which is of a higher and absolute reality (Paramarthic or noumenal Reality) like the Self! The Bhashya summarily dismisses any such attempt as “It is not even worth mentioning it!”

### **The Lesson to Take From this Verse**

What is the practical implication of all this? What is the value we are placing on permanency of the Self? It makes our lives rooted to the Truth of existence. We become fearless when we understand the true nature of our immortality.

Great Mahatmas of India have given fearless replies to foreign conquerors who came to threaten them with death. Let alone Mahatmas, even great freedom fighters have walked fearlessly to the gallows for the cause of Mother India’s Independence.

There is a big difference between fanatical bravery without understanding the truth, and the above brand of fearless bravery with understanding of the truth.

### **Verse 6: Vedanta’s Theory of Perception**

आभारूपस्य विश्वस्य भानं भासनिधेर्विना ।

कदाचिन्नावकल्पेत भा चाहं तेन सर्वगः ॥ ६॥

1	<i>abhaa-roopasya vishvasya,</i>	<i>The nature of the world is insentiency.</i>
2	<i>bhaanam bhaa-sannidheh vinaa;</i>	<i>Without proximity of Consciousness, awareness</i>
3	<i>kadaachit na avakalpeta,</i>	<i>of it is simply not possible.</i>
4	<i>bhaa cha aham tena sarvagah.</i>	<i>I am that Consciousness; and I am everywhere.</i>

Presented here is another mighty facet of Brahman, which greatly enhances our understanding of Him, and perhaps validates why He is considered to be the ultimate Goal of all spiritual endeavour.

The principle of All-pervasiveness of Brahman is at the heart of the discussion.

Side by side with that principle, we have the bonus of getting to know the Vedantic Theory of Perception, which itself is an amazing ancient contribution to modern physics.

### **The Vedantic Theory of Perception**

By logic it is possible to understand the all-pervading nature of the Atman. [The word Atman is used for Brahman when the frame of reference is the individual.]

At first glance, this verse is difficult to make sense of. The following thoughts may help clarify what is being said in it:

**1** 1. Objects are everywhere, as far away as the stars in outer space, trillions of miles away. An object is inert. The whole world is inert, being made up of inert objects. Ordinary light from a bulb or the sun falls on an object and illuminates it. But ordinary light is also inert. It cannot know the object. How do we get to know an inert object? What is the theory to perceive it?

**2-3** In addition to ordinary light, the '**Light of Consciousness**' also has to fall upon it. The object has to be in the proximity of this light in order to make known its nature, shape, form, etc. Without Consciousness the object cannot be known. Since we *do* see and know at least some of these objects, we can deduce that from each individual some Consciousness must be 'reaching' the object; else we will not know it. Many can know the object at the same time as I do.

**4** Now for the sweeping truth of the matter: Consciousness must be present *everywhere*, not possessed by any individual person. However, each person's knowledge of an object differs due to variations in the interference or reflection of that Consciousness produced by his subtle body. That interference comes from me, from my intellect, to be more precise. My intellect borrows the Light of Consciousness. The borrowed Light is called the reflection of Consciousness. That varies from Jiva to Jiva.

Thus is the basic Theory of Perception presented in simple layman's language.

#### **The Upadhis: Compared to Light Bulb**

Electricity may be present in the wires. How do we tell its presence? We insert a light bulb in the line. If it lights up we know there is electricity. In the same way, Consciousness is everywhere. We need an Upadhi, a de-limiting equipment such as the human intellect, to manifest that Consciousness. True, intellects may vary in capacity to do the manifesting, but the point here is to prove the existence of Consciousness, not the power of the intellect.

**Objection:** In spite of the above logical explanation, an objector says, "I really do not 'feel' that I am everywhere. In theory it sounds fine, but in practice I do not experience it."

Another clever objector adds, "If the Upadhi is needed to show us the presence of Consciousness, then surely the Upadhi must be greater than Consciousness."

That is not a logical objection – it is like saying that a measuring rod is greater than the thing measured. The Upadhi, like the light bulb, is an inert instrument, a testing probe only. By the amount of importance we give to it, it deludes our understanding and makes us identify with it. That is its severe drawback; we falsely mix up the greatness of Consciousness with the greatness of the Upadhi. It is Consciousness that is the essential basis of Existence, not the small, restricted Upadhi.

#### **Practical Use of This Fact About Brahman**

The final conclusion we can draw from this verse is that Jiva is essentially Brahman. If we can just succeed in negating our Upadhis, then we can actually experience Brahman.

How does this knowledge help us? It widens our thinking. From narrow-minded thinking, we develop broad-mindedness. Our heart expands to feel the pains of others. We grow in compassion and fellow-feeling. We learn to reach out to all. We learn that the Lord works through all beings to do His work. We begin to respect the functions and talents of others. We develop universal love. Such are the practical benefits of having this Vedantic vision of unity and universality.

This last quality of all-pervasiveness of Brahman is the touchstone of Vedanta. It sifts it out from other views and outlooks on life. This factor makes it impossible to hate or fear anyone. It is the basis of Vedanta's philosophy of universal love and viewing all mankind as one family. No other philosophy has such a firm foundation for adopting this view of life.

---

\*\*\*\*\*

### 3. SUPERIMPOSITION OF WORLD

(verses 7-8, 2 no.)

**T**HE LINK BETWEEN Non-duality and Duality is the principle of Superimposition. Through this principle, Vedanta is able to explain the connection between the world and Brahman. No other connection is possible between Brahman and the world. Every other explanation leads one into a logical cul-de-sac.

**Verse 7: 4-Step Logic From Duality to Non-Duality**

न हि भानादृते सत्त्वं नर्ते भानं चितोऽचितः ।

चित्सम्भेदोऽपि नाध्यासादृते तेनाहमद्वयः ॥ ७॥

1	<i>na hi bhaanaad rite sattwam,</i>	<i>There is no <b>World</b> without <b>experience</b>;</i>
2	<i>na rite bhaanam chitah achitah;</i>	<i>No experience without <b>sentiency and inertness</b>;;</i>
3	<i>chit-sambhandhah api na adhyaasaad,</i>	<i>No association of these two (sentiency and inertness) is possible but for <b>superimposition</b>;</i>
4	<i>rite tena aham advayah.</i>	<i>and without superimposition, I am <b>Non-dual</b>!</i>

We first present the 4-step logic given in the verse:

**1 Step 1:** The world of Duality is as good as non-existent, if we cannot experience it.

**2 Step 2:** Experience is not possible, unless we have both sentiency and inertness.

**3 Step 3:** Sentiency and inertness cannot co-exist, except through Superimposition.

**4 Step 4:** Without superimposition, there would be only Non-duality.

**Three Schools of Indian Philosophy:**

For our general information, Acharyaji gave us the following basic doctrines of the three main schools of philosophy:

i) **Dvaita:** school of Duality founded by Madhvacharya; it holds that Chit and Jada are two independent entities. They are called Purusha and Prakriti respectively and refer to Consciousness and the inert world respectively.

ii) **Visishtha Advaita:** school of qualified non-Duality founded by Ramanujacharya; holds that Chit and Jada related in some respects, and differ in others.

iii) **Advaita or Vedanta:** school of absolute non-Duality founded by Shankaracharya; holds that Chit alone is Real, and all else is unreality superimposed upon it.

This was given to show the important place of Superimposition in the overall picture of Indian Philosophy.

Now for the Objections and their refutation...

An objector comes along in utter disbelief and says: "Brahman? There is no such a thing as Brahman. It is all your imagination only. Where is the proof that He is there? He is

said to be beyond space, time and object. But everything we see has these three limitations. Surely there can be no such reality as Brahman.”

Before replying to this, let us look at some definitions: Being beyond space, time and objects respectively is termed **Sarvatra, Sarvadha** (or Nitya) and **Sarvagata**. The Reality fulfils all 3 conditions. All else is limited by these three, and by definition are the Unreality.

Vedanta’s response to the above objection is that there is no *object* called Brahman, which is what the objector is implying by his objection (forgive the pun). Brahman is not another object that has to have space, time and object limitations. In fact, Brahman is the substratum, and the whole world is **superimposed** upon It. The superimposed world cannot be real, nor can the substratum ever be unreal. They are two different levels of reality, like waking and dream.

Since Brahman is the substratum, there can be no duality in Him. There cannot be two Existences! And it is because of this substratum, that the world can exist. *The world is totally dependent on this substratum*; certainly not the other way around.

The objector is determined to prove his point. He quotes a scriptural verse (as is often the case, it is out of context.) “*Space and time are effects of Atman.*” By this statement he hopes to show that Brahman is a cause; this naturally leads to Brahman being regarded as just another element like space. This is the mischievous motive of this objector.

Here is Vedanta’s reply to him:

#### **Space & Self: Superimposition Alone is Possible**

Any relationship between the Self and the gross objects beginning with space implicates the Self to have the same qualities as the latter, and proves the objector to be correct. There is only one exception possible – if we can prove that space (and, of course, with it all other elements and objects) is a superimposition on Brahman, then we would have completely refuted the objection. It would mean that *the Self is independent of the objects, sharing nothing in common with their ephemeral characteristics*.

This is indeed what this verse sets out to do. It is vital that we should prove that the Unreality is merely a superimposition on the Reality. This is crucial to the Vedantic standpoint. The Truth is that the inert cannot have Consciousness, and Consciousness cannot be inert. Hence it is not by trickery that Vedanta sees superimposition as the only possible relationship; ***Superimposition is logically inevitable***.

However, this has to be proven to the satisfaction of objectors. If it is not, then the objector is just waiting to contradict this view, and propose any number of other options as being possible to explain the relation between the Self and space (in effect, between Reality and Unreality).

We examine these options, which are all well laid out and refuted in the Bhashya:

#### **Space & Self: Options Other Than Superimposition Examined**

i) **Samyoga Sambandha**: This is a relation where the two items being related are coming in contact with each other. For example, a watch placed on a table, or a pot placed on the ground.

ii) **Samavaaya Sambandha**: This is a relationship of inherence, where two objects are fused together in such a way that they lend each other their own qualities. There are four sub-types of this Sambandha:

a) *Guna-Dravya* – quality (Guna) and that which has the quality (Dravya), e.g. whiteness (the Guna) and milk (the Dravya).

b) *Kaarya-Kaaranam* – effect and cause relation; also called *Avayava-Avayavi*, meaning part and whole relationship; e.g. thread and cloth.

c) *Kriya-Kriyavan* – action-doer relation, e.g. farming and farmer.

d) *Jaati-Vyakti* – quality and substance relation, e.g. cowness and cow.

iii) **Taadaatmya**: This is an identification relationship, so identified that they cannot be separated. For example, the red-hot iron ball and fire.

iv) **Vishaya-Vishayi**: This is the relation between an object and its owner or enjoyer, e.g. a pot and the owner of the pot, or creation and Creator, where God is seen as the enjoyer of this creation.

The substratum and the superimposition upon it cannot have any of the above relationships. Each of the above is examined in the Bhashya and the reason for rejecting them is given. (These details would be beyond the requirement of this text.) The conclusion of this whole exercise is that there is one and only one relationship possible between the Self and the world – and that is one of Superimposition.

---

**Verse 8:**      *The 'My'-Thought and 'This'-Thought*

न देहो नेन्द्रियं चाहं न प्राणो न मनो न धीः ।

ममतापरिबन्धत्वादाक्रीडत्वादिदं धियः

॥ ८॥

1	<i>na dehah na indriyam cha aham,</i>	<i>I am not the body, nor the sense-organs,</i>
2	<i>na praanah na manah na dheeh;</i>	<i>nor Prana, nor the mind, nor the intellect;</i>
3	<i>mamataa pari-rabdhataat,</i>	<i>for these are all embraced by the 'my'-thought,</i>
4	<i>aakreedatvaat idam dhiyah.</i>	<i>in the playground of the 'this'-thought.</i>

Firstly, the context of this verse in the thought-flow of the text:

We are still on the subject of Brahman & World. The topic shifts to the nuts and bolts of what the world is constituted of. It boils down to a series of thoughts. This makes it possible to drop all idea of the world, and deal solely with our MIND. Everything is happening in the mind!

As one may expect, the verse gives a radical turn to our view of this world.

**1-2** The most precious things which we associate ourselves with – the gross body and the entire subtle body – is here disclaimed by 'Me', the Consciousness. Our connections to the world are all suspended, denied, in the first half of the verse. Why is this so?

**3** The five objects mentioned above are body, senses, Pranas, mind and intellect. All five are connected to 'I' and 'mine'. They make up the entire concept of 'I'. 'I and mine' is the shortest and most accurate definition of Maya! The whole human drama revolves around these two thought-types. Their source is the Ego-sense which has a mysterious existence within the human psyche.

It is found that every thought has some association with 'I' or 'mine'. The ego-sense pervades the whole mind, and begins to identify with everything that it perceives.

And what determines the content of these 'I' thoughts?

**4** They are immersed in a *playground* of 'This' thoughts out in the world of sense objects. That is their field of activity. Engrossed in objects, the entire train of thought is moving out into the world, trying to find its happiness there.

This sums up the situation of how we relate to this world. We have become perfect agents for all the superimposition to take place upon Brahman. Completely unmindful of the Supreme Being as substratum, we have engrossed our minds on the superficial objects of ephemeral value.

What is the lesson to learn from this? We turn to the Bhashya:

**An Objector** says: "I am thirsty, I am hungry, I am fat, I am lean, etc. I experience myself as all these. Yet you say that Brahman is without modifications. I cannot believe that the Self is without modifications, because I, the Self, am experiencing them."

How does the above verse answer this doubt?

In general, both experience and logical explanation are needed to prove a thing. One of these on its own is insufficient to prove any truth. Vedanta follows the same rule, without any compromise. It does not twist any logic to suit people's mental inclinations, but pursues the truth to its logical conclusion. And because it finally concludes with so much emphasis on dispassion to sense objects, it is vehemently challenged and contradicted, because of this 'inconvenient Truth'.

In the verse, the actual word used to relate the object 'this' to the subject 'I' is **Aakreedavaat**, meaning "*for the sake of sport*". The only reason for the subject to link with the object is for the sake of sport or enjoyment! The world is seen only as a playground. With such a view who will be interested in talks of dispassion!

Coming back to the objection posed, we see that the objector's experience is aimed at pleasure. That is why he is finding it hard to digest the pure, well-meaning Truth that Brahman is without all modifications.

The Bhashya takes each object one at a time and explains why it is not the Self. The **body** is like a pot. Just as I do not say "I am a pot", I cannot say "I am the body". Anything with form cannot be the Self by definition. The **sense organs** cannot be Self because they are instruments. The user of an instrument is different from and superior to the instrument. The **Pranas** are not me. The air outside is not considered to be me, so why should the air inside? Similarly, the **mind** and **intellect** are not 'me', for they, too, are inner instruments.

If individually they are not the Self, then collectively also they cannot be the Self. So, the gross and subtle bodies are definitely not the Self. All the modifications that the objector is referring to are connected to these five 'objects', not to the Self. Hence the objection is dealt with conclusively. The Self is free from all modifications.

**The Objector**, finding that his argument has failed once again, now tries something which has been called a 'wise-sounding stupid notion'. He says, "The 'I'-thought does not become the object of the 'my' and 'this' thoughts. Hence could it not be the Self?"

It's a desperate attempt to salvage something of the ego to relish! It is answered with an emphatic "No" in the next verse, which begins a new section on the Ego.

---

\*\*\*\*\*



## 4. WHO IS MR. EGO?

(verses 9-12, 4 no.)

### Verse 9: *Self Equated to Ego?*

साक्षी सर्वान्वितः प्रेयानहं नाहं कदाचन ।

परिणामपरिच्छेदपरितापैरुपप्लवात्

॥ ९॥

1	<i>saakshee sarva-anvitah preyaan,</i>	<i>The witness, all-pervading and dear, is what</i>
2	<i>aham na aham kadaachana;</i>	<i>I am. I am not the Ego, and never can be,</i>
3	<i>parinaama paricchheda,</i>	<i>for with i) modifications, ii) limitations, and</i>
4	<i>paritaapaih upaplavaat.</i>	<i>iii) afflictions, it has calamitous associations.</i>

The real nature of the Self is first pointed out. It stands for everything that is magnanimous, universal, limitless, unconfined, etc.

**1** These are described as being “witness, all-pervading and dear.” These three terms stand respectively for Consciousness, Existence and Bliss, the triple nature of Brahman.

**2** It is hard to make sense of the idea that the ego should be equated with it. The ego is the very opposite of the magnanimous qualities of the Self. Thus the Self can never be the Ego. This is what makes the objection ‘a stupid notion’. The next two lines clearly state the Ego’s narrow boundaries.

**3-4** The Ego’s ‘calamitous associations’ speak for themselves:

i) **With Modifications:** Ego is identified with likes and dislikes, joys and sorrows, and becomes good or bad, happy or unhappy accordingly. In fact, we see that changeability is its very nature. We shall deal with this topic in more detail in the next section.

ii) **With Limitations (the Upadhis):** The ego has severe limitations of space, time and objects. The body’s Upadhis restrict its influence and freedom. Everything beyond its narrow boundaries becomes a threat to it.

iii) **With Afflictions:** The 3 afflictions are from within (Adhyatmika); from natural sources beyond one’s control (Adhidaivika); and from situations, people and circumstances in life (Adhibhautika). All these cause untold sufferings to the individual.

The Self has no such drawbacks or limitations. It is ludicrous to compare It to Ego.

### The Ego’s Extensions:

Acharyaji gave us a good breakdown of the various types of Egoic relations, which comprise “its calamitous associations”:

i) **By Birth:** this is the natural relationship we have with mother and family.

ii) **By Relation:** as we grow the broader family becomes acquainted.

iii) **By Profession:** when we select a profession, another set of ego relations begin.

iv) **By Country:** the ego gets connected to the identity of the country of birth.

v) **By Society:** one's circle of friends and social contacts extends the ego.

vi) **By Spiritual Needs:** we join a service group, sect, path, or spiritual organization. If the ego connection to this is very strong, one can become a victim of fanaticism and exclude himself from all groups other than one's own.

vii) **By Culture:** there is a culture we follow which leads us into certain connections, and excludes us from others.

viii) **With Oneself:** We have certain identities due to our physical appearance, mental ability, intellectual skills, etc. These are unique to each person. These create personal boundaries around us.

The important thing to remember is that all of these have a false basis – the Ego. The Self is not differentiated along the lines of these characteristics.

---

**Verse 10: *Is the Self the Samsari?***

सुप्तेऽहमि न दृश्यन्ते दुःखदोषप्रवृत्तयः ।

अतस्तस्यैव संसारो न मे संसर्तृसाक्षिणः

॥ १०॥

1	<i>supte ahami na drishyante,</i>	<i>When the Ego goes to sleep, one does not 'see'</i>
2	<i>duhkha-dosha pravrittayah;</i>	<i>the world of sorrow and defects. For this reason,</i>
3	<i>atah tasya eva samsaarah,</i>	<i>surely Samsara must belong to the Ego alone,</i>
4	<i>na me samsartru saakshinah.</i>	<i>and not to Me who am the witness of Ego's play.</i>

**Objection:**

The prelude to this verse is an objector who, failing to identify Ego with the Self, tries to place some of the burdens of the Ego onto the shoulders of the Self. He poses this objection: "Why should the entire burden of worldly life fall onto the Ego? It is unfair. The Self also should take some portion of the responsibility or blame. Why should It go scot-free, as it were?" He gives an example to support his theory:

"For instance, when one person gets sick in a home, all the others also share the sorrow. The Self is so close to the Ego that surely It has an influence on, or is affected by, what the Ego experiences. Where is the proof that they are totally separate? We do not see that separateness in life."

This verse is the Vedantin's answer to the above objection. Sri Lakshmidhar Kavi uses the logic of **Anvaya Vyatireka** to prove that the Samsari (that part of our personality which is engaged in the world of activities) is the Ego alone and not the Self; that the Self is not even partially responsible for it. One aspect of the Anvaya Vyatireka logic states that if one thing is present, then only will the second thing be present, e.g. a pot and clay, or teacher and his students. Let us see it in operation with respect to Ego and Self.

**Application of the Logic of Anvaya Vyatireka**

**1-2** The Ego, in the state of sleep every night, does not experience any of the results or effects of his activities at this time. Whether it is sorrow or joy, celebration or dejection, elation or depression, in sleep none of these are experienced. A thief will sleep just as soundly as a saint. He is freed from the burden of his crimes while in sleep.

Thus, when the Ego personality dissolves (becomes inoperative) during sleep, the Samsaric experience also ends for the duration of the sleep. At least in sleep we all get temporary relief from the battering of our Ego. What does this prove?

**3-4** This proves that the Ego is responsible for the entire Samsaric experience, not just partially responsible. It also shows that the Self has no part in it whatsoever, because the Self is still present during sleep but none of the Samsaric play takes place then. Thus, using the principle of **Anvaya Vyatireka**, the Vedantin draws the conclusion opposite to what the objector deduces: When the Ego is not there, the Samsara experience, too, is not there. When one is absent, so is the other – that is the corollary of this logic principle. And when the Ego is present, the whole Samsara is present once again.

In other words, the Ego is a close cousin of Samsara; the Atman or Self is not connected with Samsara at all, not even as a distant relative!

#### **Some Examples From the Bhashya:**

Due to lack of discrimination, we ascribe qualities to the Self, qualities which really do not belong to It but to the Ego. Here are two examples which illustrate this.

Heat and fire are related. When water which is cool is brought near the fire, it also acquires the quality of heat, but heat does not really belong to water. It is borrowed from fire. If we do not discriminate like this, we will superimpose heat on the water.

The second example is a clear crystal. When it is placed on a red flower, it appears red. On a blue flower it appears blue. Although it is clear, it appears coloured due to the closeness of the coloured flower. Its closeness imparts to it the same shade as the flower. In the same way, the human tendency is to ascribe to the Self all the qualities of the Ego, even though the truth is that they are not connected to the Self at all.

#### **Verse 11:      *The Three States Belong to Ego***

सुप्तः सुप्तिं न जनाति नाऽसुप्ते स्वप्नजागरौ ।  
जाग्रत्स्वप्नसुषुप्तीनां साक्ष्यतोऽहमतद्दृशः                      ॥ ११॥

1	<i>suptah saptim na jaanaati,</i>	<i>The <b>Ego</b> that sleeps does not know sleep.</i>
2	<i>na asupte svapna-jaagarau;</i>	<i>In Him that sleeps not, there is no dream or waking.</i>
3	<i>jaagrat-svapna-sushuptee-naam,</i>	<i>Of the dream, waking and sleep states,</i>
4	<i>saakshi atah aham atad dashah.</i>	<i>I am the <b>Witness</b>, thus, free from these states.</i>

#### **Objection:**

This verse owes its origin to the following objection: An objector uses some very smart logic to prove to the Vedantin that the three states are governed by the Self, not the Ego. He wants to go all out to undermine the Vedantin's definition of the Self as that which remains aloof, unchanging and unaffected by the whims and fancies of the Ego. He wants to blame the Self for our whole involvement in worldly life. To this end he says:

"The waking and dream states belong to the Self. Let me prove it to you. We said in verse 9 that Ahamkara (Ego) was absent in deep sleep – that is okay, but for the same reason we can say that deep sleep does not belong to Ahamkara. If Ego is not there, how can sleep belong to it? And let me go further – the next logical thing from that is that the

waking and dream states, which have the same locus or status as deep sleep, also do not belong to Ahamkara! This is my doubt. Have you an answer to that?"

If the objector is right, Vedanta is in serious trouble! There is no one else but the Self who has to take the responsibility for all three states. That would change the Vedantin's definition of the Self.

### **The Vedantin's Reply:**

Sri Lakshmidhar Kavi stands brilliantly firm for the Self. The Bhashyakara also reflects this brilliance in his Bhashya. He explains:

**1** In deep sleep, Ahamkara does not die; it goes into a *dormant* state with Samsara. Deep sleep does indeed belong to Ahamkara and to none other. Here is the proof.

**2** The Sakshi or Self is the witness of deep sleep. The Atman does not go to sleep like Ahamkara. It is what illumines the sleep state. That is why, while Ego cannot remember anything about sleep (because it was not there), the Sakshi is the one who *knows* that "*I did not know anything while sleeping*", because It was witness to it.

What may be confusing is perhaps the use of the word '*belongs to*'. With regard to the Sakshi 'belongs to' really means 'illumines'; the Sakshi illumines the sleep experience, being its witness. With regard to the Ahamkara, 'belongs to' really means 'responsible for'; the Ego is responsible for the modification or transformation undergone by a change of state.

**3-4** The Self does not sleep; indeed, It needs no sleep. Nor does it remain awake or be in dream; It does not need them either, for It is "Consciousness Itself". How can it be responsible for the change of states between waking, dream and deep sleep? A change of state is what the Ahamkara needs and wants and arranges. That need is physiological, and occurs at the will of the Ahamkara. How can the Self be held responsible for it?

However, the Self's involvement is solely to remain their Witness and illumine all three states, that is all. It is present in all three states as their Witness only.

### **Can Ego Be Absolved from Dream & Waking Also?**

We can now deal with the second part of the objector's proposition: his deduction to absolve the Ego from the waking and dream states also, thus paving the way for him to place full responsibility on the Self for all of the Ego's mischief. The Bhashya answers this part with the objector's own logic:

'Somebody' was awake in sleep to know that there was nothing to be known. It was not Ahamkara because he was sleeping. So the objector says it must be the Atman as Sakshi. Using this very logic, the Bhashyakara says that if the Atman is not responsible for but only witnesses the deep sleep experience, then it is equally not responsible for but only witnesses the other two states as well. So Ahamkara has to take the responsibility, not for *none* of these three, but for *all* of these three!

Thus it is shown that Atman is only the support of the three states, the enjoyer is still Ahamkara. Atman never sleeps, so it cannot awake! This entire world drama is the sole creation of the Ego.

---

\*\*\*\*\*

**Verse 12: Knowledge in the Three States**

विज्ञानविरतिः सुप्तिस्तज्जन्म स्वप्नजागरौ ।  
तत्साक्षिणः कथं मे स्युर्नित्यज्ञानस्य ते त्रयः ॥ १२॥

1	<i>vijnaana viratih suptih,</i>	<i>Cessation of all <b>particular knowledge</b> is deep sleep;</i>
2	<i>tat janma svapna-jaagarau;</i>	<i>its rise constitutes dream and waking states.</i>
3	<i>tat saakshinah katham me syuh,</i>	<i>To Me, their Witness, how can it belong?</i>
4	<i>nitya jnaanasya te trayah.</i>	<i>I am ever the <b>Knower</b> of these three states.</i>

This verse expands on the conclusion of the last verse by taking the enquiry into the realm of **knowledge**. We now deduce, from the point of view of knowledge, that the three states have no connection whatsoever with the Self.

**KNOWING – Another Difference Between Self & Ego**

In the above two verses we have noted that: The Atman is not involved in any way with Samsara, nor in the changing between one state to another. This is entirely Ahamkara's responsibility; it is done with Ahamkara's consent, will and call, not the Self's.

A third difference is that the knowing of the Atman is different altogether from the knowing of Ahamkara. In the sentence, 'I know that I did not know anything in sleep', the first 'I' is Atman and the second 'I' is Ahamkara. That should clarify everything with regard to the knowing. It means that the Self's knowing is in an absolute sense, while the Ego's knowing is relative to the object and the mind. Another term for it is:

**Particular Knowledge**

**1** In contrast to the pure, constant knowledge of Sakshi (see further down), is what is called here as **Vijnaana** or "*particular knowledge*", which is dependent on something external to the Self, particularly an 'object', and hence its name – it is also called '*objective knowledge*'. The object need not be a gross object, but could also be a subtle object such as a thought – hence, it can also be called '*thought-based or mind-based knowledge*'.

**Deep Sleep:** Here the mind is not available to one's awareness. This means that thoughts are not available. This means that the ego-thought as well as all objects are not available. This is described here as 'cessation of particular knowledge'. The Bhashya also refers to it as Uparati because there is no mind available in this state.

**2** Once we come out of deep sleep, and into the dream or waking states, the mind becomes available once again and the particular knowledge returns as before.

**Waking State:** The 'birth' or return of full knowledge in the waking state is called *Visesha Jnana* ( or **Vijnaana** in this text), and translates as *particular knowledge*. The orderly pattern of thought we see in the waking state may be thought of as the orderly manner in which flowers are threaded through a garland (cf. dream state below).

**Dream State:** This is a 'blurred' state of awareness, between deep sleep and being fully awake. The objects of knowledge are all in the subtle realm, not the gross world. Here there is no order in the thoughts produced. It is as if the garland string has snapped and the flowers of thoughts have become loose. They are picked up at random in one's dream, in a muddled order! Therefore, dreams do not obey any laws of logic.

### **Two Roles of the Self:**

**3** In the above three states, there is a common factor – the Self – and it has two roles to play. They are:

i) **Saakshi**: The Self is only their “*witness*”, i.e. Sakshi. It is the uninvolved observer of all that takes place. It did not order the body; the body was ordered by Prarabdha Karma. So Prarabdha has to deal with all the experiences of the body. The Sakshi is only the spectator of the scene!

**4** The nature of the Self is pure Knowledge. This is the definition of Consciousness or the word Chit in Sat-Chit-Ananda. This knowledge is constant, it is of the nature of awareness. It is not thought-based. Hence it is not subject to change.

ii) **Nitya Jnana**: The essential nature of the Self is “*eternal knowledge*”. This is hard for us to understand from the Vyavaharic level, where such a thing does not exist.

The constancy of knowledge in Self cannot compare with the ups and downs that characterize the knowledge in the three states. It is in stark contrast to the latter, which is thought-based and therefore called **Vritti Jnana**. There is no birth or death in that supreme state of Knowledge. The mind is not involved in the metaphysical state of Nitya Jnana.

### **Three States Independent of Each Other**

Except for the above common underlying factor, the Self, there is no connection between these three states. This may surprise many, but here is the explanation for it:

Firstly, only one state is experienced at a time by the Ahamkara. When one state is in operation, the other two cannot even be imagined.

Secondly, each state has its own governing body. When in the sleep state, the Sleep Government makes the laws; in dream, the Dream Government rules; and in the waking state, the Waking Government. When one government functions, the other parties become non-functional – they are not even present as the Opposition Party!

**Conclusion:** We notice that the key factor that separates the Self from Ego is the type of knowledge. The former has ‘eternal knowledge’, the latter has ‘particular knowledge’. We also fine-tune our definition of Jada or inertness; it is not so much “that which does not *move*”, but “that which has no ability to *know*”. This is why this verse is all about comparing the states of knowledge in the two cases. The conclusion is: the Self’s knowledge is Nitya or constant; the Ego’s knowledge is Vishesha or particular, i.e. mind-based. While the Self is undoubtedly **Chetana** or sentient, the Ego is distinctly **Jada** or inert.

Alas, it is only because Ahamkara rules our day-to-day life that we find it hard to imagine a state such as Nitya Jnana, where the Self governs. The three states in which man revels daily, are too paltry for the Self’s sovereignty. If our objector paid a little more attention on the pretentious kingship of the Ego, he would realize he is heir to a Kingdom infinitely vaster than that in which Ego dabbles as a puppet!

---

\*\*\*\*\*





## 5. MODIFICATIONS ARE UNREAL

(verses 13-15, 3 no.)

IN THE ABOVE SECTION on Ego and Self, verse 9 mentioned the Ego's "calamitous associations". Modification was mentioned as one of three such associations. We now look deeper into this aspect in order to throw more light on the Truth.

The search for the Truth is, by definition of the Truth, a search for "that which never changes". Truth would not be Truth if it kept changing. Truth would be that one unchanging factor amidst everything that changes. It has to be that constant against which all changing phenomena are measured. The subject of modifications or change is of interest to the seeker because change is easily observable. It provides the best clue to indicate what is not the Truth. It tells the spiritual seeker exactly where Truth does not lie.

The previous section viewed the Self in relation to the Ego, at the individual or Vyashti level. From this viewpoint we learnt that the whole responsibility of worldly experience falls on the Ego, the kingpin of the **Jiva**. We now view the Self in comparison with Creation, at the Samashti level. We learn how to see the ever-constant Truth in the midst of an ever-changing Creation. It is an absorbing study, as we shall see, and prepares the seeker's mind to launch itself into the higher flights of spiritual life.

### Verse 13: *Free From All Modifications*

षड्विकारवतां वेत्ता निर्विकारोऽहमन्यथा ।  
तद्विकारानुसन्धानं सर्वथा नावकल्पते ॥ १३॥

1	<i>shad-vikaara-vataam vettaa,</i>	<i>I am the knower of things having the <b>six modifications</b>.</i>
2	<i>nirvikaarah aham anyathaa;</i>	<i>Hence, I am free of all such modifications.</i>
3	<i>tad vikaara anusandhaanam,</i>	<i>Otherwise, the <b>memory</b> of those modifications</i>
4	<i>sarvathaa na avakalpate.</i>	<i>would in no way be possible to imagine.</i>

### Verse 14: *Can the Changing Remember the Change?*

तेन तेन हि रूपेण जायते लीयते मुहुः ।  
विकारि वस्तु तस्यैषामनुसन्धातृता कुतः ॥ १४॥

5	<i>tena tena hi roopena,</i>	<i>Taking different forms successively,</i>
6	<i>jaayate leeyate muhuh;</i>	<i>if a thing is born and disappears every moment –</i>
7	<i>vikaari vastunah teshaa,</i>	<i>of such a <b>changing thing</b>, by another changing thing</i>
8	<i>anusandhaatritaa kutah?</i>	<i>how can there be any <b>recollection</b> of it?</i>

These two verses jointly contain a stunning logic that is not only irrefutable but also presented with the elegance of poetic poise. It does Vedanta proud by placing it firmly on the highest philosophical pedestal, which it fully deserves. All credit to the razor-sharp intellect of Sri Lakshmidhar Kavi for so thoughtfully presenting the case of Vedanta.

Terms: A new term is used in the Bhashya: **Shad-Vikaara-vaan**, “one who is subject to the six modifications”. The six modifications are:

- i) **Asti** (Existence): This is the state before birth and after death – pure existence;
- ii) **Jayate** (Birth): The child emerges into the outer world, with gross and subtle body;
- iii) **Vardhate** (Growth): With nourishment and Prana the body grows to maturity;
- iv) **Viparinamate** (Maturity): It matures into an adult body;
- v) **Apaksheeyate** (Decay): The body withdraws; hair greys, sight weakens, etc;
- vi) **Vinashyati** (Death): The elements return to where they came from.

Its opposite is **Nirvikaara-vaan** or “one who is free of all modifications”. Nirvikaara stands as the witness of the Vikaara, and thus fully justifies the term Sakshi.

### The Yukti (Logic): “I am Without Modifications”

**1-2** A new word used in the verse is **Vettaa**, which literally means “one who is the knower (of that which changes)”. This word is used with reference to the observer of the modifications. The equivalent term used with reference to the three states is **Saakshi**, which we used in the previous section. Vetta and Sakshi turn out to be the same entity in Vedantic terminology, namely, the Self.

If the Vetta is the knower of the modifications, then he must be the same as the Nirvikaara, the one who is free of those modifications. The knower of the modifications cannot be subject to the modifications as well. Sri Lakshmidhar Kavi pins his reasoning on this one solid point. It is the kingpin of his logic, and this is what he sets out to prove in this verse. What we are trying to show may be expressed as an equation:

<b>VETTA</b>	<b>=</b>	<b>NIRVIKAARA</b>
<b>The knower of modifications</b>	<b>=</b>	<b>One who is free of all modifications.</b>

Even in ordinary secular matters, a witness who keeps changing his testimony is not trusted. What would be the spiritual fate of man whose witnessing Self keeps changing?

The Self as the knower has already been established in the previous verse. All that remains to be established is that the Self is also free of all modifications.

Just as objectors tried to equate the Sakshi with the Ego in the previous section, here they are trying to equate the Vetta with the Shad-Vikaara-vaan, i.e proposing that the Self is subject to the six modifications. That has not been conclusively refuted yet. The logic of the former attempt was **Anvaya Vyatireka**, (verse 10). Now the same logic is being used by the objectors to support their contention. And again the Vedantin uses their own weapon to refute their theory.

### The Case for Vetta

**3** Sri Lakshmidhar Kavi starts by supposing that the objector is correct – that both, the Vetta and Vikaara-vaan are changing in accordance with the changing modifications. In

such a case it would be impossible to assess what is happening and to whom. There will be no stable reference point from which to gauge what is happening. Sri Sureshwaracharya is quoted to support this viewpoint. It will be like assessing the speed of the flow of a river by being in a moving boat within the river – it is impossible to measure it that way.

**4** In such a case, posits the Bhashya, one would need a second Self who is stable and fixed against whom both these changing entities can be measured. Self 1 will be the Vetta, while Self 2 will be the stable Self. (It would be difficult enough to have two Selves in charge of one individual, but we are only assuming such a situation.) If one is prepared to posit a second Self purely to serve as a reference point, then what is wrong in thinking of the Vetta itself to be that reference point? In any case, is there any person who feels that he has two Selves in him? The very idea is absurd.

**5-6** The difficulty above is multiplied when we take into account the fact that modifications are happening moment to moment. We will end up with the belief, as held by the Kshanika Vijnana Vadins, a sect of Buddhists, that the Self changes from moment to moment – there is no stability in the Self whatsoever. Every moment we are a different person! The memory of our own past becomes totally impossible. Who is to remember whom! In such a situation the Self becomes just another inert object subject to change.

**7-8** Apart from being a logical absurdity, look at how complex life would become even granting it was possible: How are we going to remember past events? Which Self would be responsible for which incident? A whole phantom train of illogical possibilities will stare into our face if we accept the theory of a changing Self. Instead of opening the doors to such craziness, why not just adopt the principle that the Self does not change with the changing modifications?

Let us put aside the moment-by-moment change of the Self. Why, even if a *single* change is permitted due to a single modification, there is already difficulty in recollecting one's memory of a past incident. This is clearly stated in this verse as "the memory of those modifications would in no way be possible to imagine."

Thus, standing on the firm ground of an unchanging substratum which witnesses all the changing phenomena experienced by the Ego, Sri Lakshmidhar Kavi proves in sound logical terms that the Self is unaffected by any modifications – yes, zero modifications, not even one modification is permissible. Thus he upholds the liberating philosophy of Vedanta from being toppled by reckless, irresponsible thinkers.

### **Objection:**

The Bhashya raises one further question from the objector: "Are the modifications and the thing undergoing modifications (that is, the Shad-Vikaara-vaan, as you say) different or the same? If they are different, then there cannot be any relationship between them, like a cow and a horse – no relationship between them is possible. If they are the same, then does the modification (which is the thing itself) rise and disappear from moment to moment?"

This objector's question raises more questions than answers. These are all spelt out in the Bhashya and in Guruji's commentary but are only academic. For this reason, in verse 14, Sri Lakshmidhar simply throws the ball back into the court of the opposition. The Vedantic standpoint is quite clear and consistent: there is a permanent substratum upon which all objects play as a mere appearance. That substratum is the unchanging Self (the Vetta as defined here), free of all modifications (the Nirvikaara). **Vetta = Nirvikaara.**

Thus is the discussion concluded with clarity from the Vedantin's side, and a pile up of dark clouds of doubt on the side of the objectors!

Acharyaji quoted a statement made by Pujya Gurudev. In the old days cinemas used to play a reel of film. Often it used to snap in the midst of a picture. Then the screen only could be seen. People would start whistling when this happens. Gurudev said once that this was the whistle of realization! They had just come to a realization of the substratum after being deceived for so long by the pictures on it!

**Verse 15: Birth & Death Defined Under Non-Existence**

न च स्वजन्म नाशं वा द्रष्टुमर्हति कश्चन ।

तौ हि प्रागुत्तराभावचरमप्रथमक्षणौ

॥ १५॥

1	<i>na cha sva-janma naasham vaa,</i>	<i>In addition, one's birth or one's death</i>
2	<i>drishtum arhati kashchana;</i>	<i>cannot be seen by anyone. Indeed, for these two:</i>
3	<i>tau hi praak uttara abhaava,</i>	<i>birth is the <u>last moment</u> of 'prior non-existence'; and</i>
4	<i>charama prathama kshanau.</i>	<i>death the <u>first moment</u> of 'posterior non-existence'.</i>

**Objection:**

Now we have an objection which needs special attention. The objector proposes a model which has a changing Atman that knows the changes, in itself as well as the outer changes. The Bhashya pays due attention to the details of this objection:

"We should not stipulate whether this Self is changing or changeless. Let us assume a Self that has both these qualities. It can have two compartments, as it were, one that changes and one that does not. It allows for a little changing and a little changelessness. It is a kind of oneness which tolerates a bit of difference within itself. An example would be a family. The members are all unique individuals in themselves, but they also share some common privileges as a family. There is a family-ness and an individuality in them. Why can we not conceive the possibility of such a Self?

"And let us also assume that it has a special ability to know. We should not shut off this possibility. Let us consider this Atman is such a special exceptional object that it can know all that is happening to it as well as all the changes happening around it. For the moment do not question how it does that. As an example, consider a gem among ordinary stones. The gem stands out from the stones. It has the exceptional quality of brilliance which illuminates it as well as the other stones. It knows its own brilliance and it knows the mediocrity of other stones in its vicinity."

The objector is obviously very well prepared; he has another example up his sleeve. "Take the case of the cloth and thread. The two share some common ground. If they were completely different, you could walk into a shop and ask for cloth that has no thread in it! Similarly, what would you say of an Atman with all these exceptional qualities in it?"

To such an objector, the Vedantin replies with this verse.

**Birth and Death Cannot be Known by Jiva, the "Changing Self":**

The Vedantin's reply to this ingenious objector runs along these lines:

**1-2** He shows that a changing Self would not be able to know at least two of the six modifications, namely, *birth* and *death*. (We shall see why in a moment.) If it cannot know these two modifications, then how can it know all the other modifications between them!

**3-4** Birth and death are defined in a very technical way. [We have already come across this in *Drig Drishya Viveka*, Text 13, but the context and purpose there was different.] The object, in this case the Jiva, exists from birth to death. Outside those two limiting points of time there is non-existence. What about the two instant moments of birth and death? Do they fall under existence or non-existence?

The portion of non-existence before **birth** is called *Praag-Abhaava*, meaning “prior non-existence”. The portion of non-existence after **death** is called *Uttara-Abhaava*, meaning “posterior non-existence.” Now the interesting puzzle – where do birth and death fall?

Vedanta’s technical definition is well thought out; it is not just a guess. Both these moments are not known to the Jiva, the individual soul who is the knower of his existence between those two moments. Since he does not know those moments, Vedanta classifies them under ‘non-existence’, not under ‘existence’.

Thus we have birth as the **Charama Kshana** or the last moment of prior non-existence, rather than the first moment of existence! Similarly, death is **Prathama Kshana** or first moment of posterior non-existence, rather than the last moment of existence! There is a technicality in this definition which places birth and death into the non-existence period.

When we define birth and death in this manner on the time scale, we see that it is impossible for the changing Self (Jiva) to *know* these two events purely because it is not present there.

Thus we see that it is illogical to hold the view that Consciousness can know its own modifications. The only other option is that Consciousness is free of all modifications.

The objector gets his money’s worth of argument that he bargained for!

---

\*\*\*\*\*



## 6. IGNORANCE CAUSES SAMSARA

(verses 16-18, 3 no.)

IN THE FOLLOWING THREE verses the game shifts to a different part of the Vedanta playing field. We have just seen that the Self is neither the Ego nor that which keeps changing. In terms of the 'game', the Self is neither a bowler nor a batsman. What is He then that sets Him apart from these two? He is the umpire. Not being individuality nor changeability, Vedanta's answer looks to the cause of them both – **Maya** at the cosmic level and **ignorance** at the individual level. That is the subject of this section.

Our attention shifts now to Maya and Ignorance. The former is the key factor in projecting the universe at cosmic level; the latter in projecting life in the net of Samsara at the individual level. Vedanta holds a view of ignorance (explained in the next verse) that is most uncharacteristic compared to other schools of philosophy. So much so that objections to the Vedantic view are rife among them. We begin with one that is well-thought out.

### Objection:

The objector states: "There is no purpose served in gaining identity with Brahman, because Samsara cannot be eliminated. Samsara is experienced as a result of the body-mind-intellect Upadhis, which are due to ignorance. And try as we might, Samsara is here to stay; that means, ignorance is here to stay, it cannot just be dispelled by knowledge. It is of no use saying Atma Jnana will free us from Samsara – that is just not possible."

We are heading for another dizzy spell of intellectual reasoning. Someone once complained to Pujya Gurudev that Vedanta was too intellectual. Gurudev smilingly told him, "Of course, knowledge has to be 'intellect'-tual. Do you expect it to be stomach-tual!"

The objector goes on, "As long as the Upadhis are there it will always be like this. It will be futile to try to ignore life as it is. And even if you get liberation, the Upadhis are still there, so of what use is this liberation that you struggle so hard for? You should forget about your Brahma Jnana, and accept that ignorance cannot be removed. If you ask why, it is because, as you yourself say, "it is beginningless". It was never created and so can never be destroyed. Bondage is going to be there no matter what you do."

Clearly, this objector's purpose is to put the brakes on Sadhana, on renunciation, on Tapas, on everything that Vedanta holds necessary for gaining liberation. If he is allowed to win his argument, that is the end of Sadhana. Materialists would simply love that!

The Vedantin's reply from the luminous pen of Sri Lakshmidhar Kavi is this section:

---

### Verse 16:     *Is Ignorance Real?*

न प्रकाशेऽहमित्युक्तिर्यत्प्रकाशैकबन्धना ।

स्वप्रकाशं तमात्मानमप्रकाशः कथं स्पृशेत्

॥ १६॥





unreal thing cannot be experienced, but we do see and experience ignorance. We need not infer it, it is experienced directly.

“Nor can we say it is real, because a real thing cannot be negated and this ignorance *can* be negated, i.e. it does have an end. Hence, it is considered to be “inexplicable”, as it is neither Sat or Asat, neither existing nor not existing.”

### **Enquiry Destroys Ignorance:**

**2** Rightly has it been said that the life of ignorance is the absence of enquiry. No sooner we begin an inquest on ignorance, it takes to its heels.

How can we deny the existence of ignorance when we feel its presence? The example of an owl is quoted. The owl can see at night when there is no light, but during the day it is ‘blind’ even though there is so much of light! How does one explain this contradiction? Ignorance is just like that. Under delusion anything is possible.

**An Anecdote:** Acharyaji was reminded of a joke by this fact. A man was greatly attached to his fiancé. However, he had to leave the town due to a change of work. He spoke to her passionately about how he would miss her. She said to him equally passionately that he should promise he would come back to her. He said he would. She said, “What if you find another person?” He answered, “One who is madly in love like me may do anything!” This is the power of delusion.

### **The Thick Mist Simile:**

**3-4** The simile is a perfect one for the “inexplicable” ignorance. It is just something as evanescent as a heavy fog. It really is nothing. One may think a thick cloud is solid and try to stand on it. But when he tries to, there is nothing solid about it. When the sun rises, the fog lifts up and simply vanishes.

That sun is **Knowledge** obtained by self-enquiry. The fog is ignorance, an unreal ‘substance’, only appearing to be real, a ‘mist’-ical apparition! Like Shakespeare’s ‘Much Ado About Nothing’, this entire world drama is much ado about the nothing of ignorance.

We only need to turn the searchlight on the existence of ignorance; it gets a fright and hastens out of sight. If instead we begin to try to find out more about it, ask a whole lot of questions about what it is, etc, like the way scholars do, it will be as Guruji puts it, “trying to get more knowledge about ignorance!”

Ignorance can be seen from three different points of view:

- i) from that of the ignorant person, it is seen as a cause of his suffering – very real;
- ii) from the standpoint of a seeker with a logical, enquiring mind, it is inexplicable;
- iii) from the view of a realized sage, it does not even exist.

So much then regarding the definition of this intriguing thing called Ignorance.

The next verse tells us all about the great damage that this “inexplicable” thing is capable of doing. Though itself unknowable to us, we know all about what it leaves in its wake. Like a tsunami, we only get to know about it when all the damage is already done.

---

\*\*\*\*\*

**Verse 18:      *The World Dream***

आत्माज्ञानमहानिद्राजृम्भितेऽस्मिन् जगन्मये ।  
दीर्घस्वप्ने स्फुरन्त्येते स्वर्गमोक्षादिविभ्रमाः

॥ १८ ॥

1	<i>aatma ajnaana mahaa-nidraa,</i>	<i>Out of the great 'Sleep' called ignorance,</i>
2	<i>jrimbhite asmin jagat maye;</i>	<i>is projected the <b>dream</b> consisting of this world.</i>
3	<i>deergha-swapne sphuranti ete,</i>	<i>In this long dream, there spring forth</i>
4	<i>svarga mokshaadi vibhramaah.</i>	<i>the <b>delusions</b> such as heaven, liberation, etc.</i>

We come now to a very fundamental criticism of Vedanta, which has always attended the march of Vedanta throughout its history, and will perhaps be there always in the future as well. Vedanta is misconstrued by many people to be very “other worldly”, taking everything in this world to be unreal. Quoting the famous words of Vedanta *Brahma Satyam, Jagan Mithya*, critics have laid at the door of Vedanta a feeling of heartlessness towards this world, as though Vedantins do not feel for the problems therein.

This reputation of Vedanta has had its inevitable side-effects. Vedantin's have been at the butt end of many jokes against them. True Vedantin's do not have a problem with that, for they are quite used to seeing everything as unreal – nothing more so than a joke!

**Objection:**

**1-2** Here is an objector who vents his disapproval in the following words smacking of anger: “Everything is unreal and only Brahman is real, which tells me that everything is created by Ignorance only, am I right?” The Vedantin agrees 100% with this statement, so he says, “You are right, well done!”

Now the objector adds the sting: “If everything is unreal – listen carefully – all the scriptures also are unreal. They have also been created in this unreal world. All the Karma Kanda practices, you say, prescribe Yajnas that gain unreal worldly treasures. It is the same with the Upasanas – you say they are only for gaining unreal higher worlds! Well, leave all that, even the practice of all your Sadhanas also gains nothing real. You cannot say that only the Karma and Upasana Kanda portions give unreal results and the Jnana portion alone gives ‘real’ results. We have to take the whole of the Vedas as unreal! Do you see the big problem you land yourself in by saying that everything is unreal?”

**The Vedantin's Reply:**

O friend! Listen to what Vedanta really teaches. You are taking one statement and quoting it out of context. First consider what we have always been saying – that the Vedas only lose their validity after one has gained realization of the Self, not before. Only for the one who has become the very embodiment of the Vedas are they not needed any longer. Until then, they are our umbrella to take shelter under. They guide and show us the path.

**3-4** The world also has a big role to play. Vedanta is not unmindful of that. True it may be a dream, but even a dream has some value. In a dream you see a lion. Suddenly that lion roars and you get up out of your dream to the real world. Do you then just laugh off the dream-lion? No, you cannot. It was the dream-lion that woke you up to reality. You have to be thankful to it. In the same way this Samsaric life has something to teach us, however unreal we say it is; it is not to be rejected in the sense you have taken it. Some suffering is experienced through it which, like the roar of a lion, gives us a rude awakening to the real

purpose of life. Then we awaken to our spiritual responsibility and take that up more seriously. That comes about due to the experience of this 'dream' world only.

Until such awakening takes place, it is the scriptures that point the way to extricate us from the darkness we are in. Without the scriptures, we will be in total darkness with no hope of finding ourselves.

I take a road to get to a certain place. When I reach it, I do not ask for that road to be broken up because I do not need it any more. Someone else will need to use it to get to where I am. So also on the spiritual journey, there is a need for all the roads leading towards God. We cannot say they are useless just because we have no use of them any longer. The Karma Kanda and other Upasanas, even the efforts people make to attain heavenly worlds are all helpful at a certain stage of growth on the spiritual journey. Whatever is in the scriptures has validity to someone or other. The scriptures are our guiding light in all phases of our growth. That is the correct way to view them – they are our very Mother, who cares selflessly for us always.

This is the principle by which the Vedantin will always live and teach others, no matter how much men of narrow vision may criticize him. The Vedantin is truly interested in the Godward growth of every single soul on earth. Even a worm that moves towards God claims his admiration and reverence!

In conclusion, the spiritual seeker's attitude towards ignorance and its chain of effects is to get out of its clutches as quickly as possible, not to sit back and debate over it and, least of all, not to start deifying it! When one is caught in a fire, the only thought one has is how to escape from it, not to start discussing how the fire started.

---

\*\*\*\*\*



## 7. DEALING WITH DIVERSITY

(verses 19-21, 3 no.)

HAVING SPELT OUT THE diversity due to ignorance in the last verse, the Vedantic Teacher now hastens to tell us the correct attitude we should have towards this diversity. We are taught in this section to see the Unity that underlies all this diversity.

### Verse 19:      *Unity in Diversity*

जडाजडविभागोऽयमजडे मयि कल्पितः ।

भित्तिभागे समे चित्रचराचरविभागवत्

॥ १९॥

1	<i>jada-ajada vibhaagah ayam,</i>	<i>This division of the inert and the sentient,</i>
2	<i>ajade mayi kalpitah;</i>	<i>is imagined in Me, who am Pure Consciousness;</i>
3	<i>bhitti-bhaage same chitre,</i>	<i>just as on a flat painting on a portion of a brick wall,</i>
4	<i>chara-achara vibhaagavat.</i>	<i>is drawn both stationary and moving objects.</i>

### Objection:

This is a very simple doubt that arises, perhaps due to the general teaching of non-duality in Vedanta. The objector says, “If everything is a superimposition upon the non-dual Brahman, then why is it that we have so many differences of so many different kinds? First we have the split into sentient and insentient objects. Then there are the objects that are enjoyed and those that are disliked. We have so many kinds of people with various temperaments, tastes, habits, cultures, languages; so many modes of transport, so many foods, clothes, types of homes, etc. This world is just full of diversity, yet you simply group them all under one category – a Superimposition. Can you explain this?”

### Unity in Diversity

This verse explains how we should be viewing the diversity of this world.

1-2 The main two divisions are living beings and inert or insentient objects. In actual fact, some gross inert ‘objects’ have subtle bodies in them. They form a special category of objects called ‘living beings’. They, too, are inert objects, but their subtle bodies have the capacity to reflect the Reality and enable them to perform functions far beyond what mere gross inert bodies can perform. They are not sentient but through them Consciousness manifests sentiency.

Such living beings can feel, think, rationalize, eat and drink, propagate themselves, move about, etc due to the Consciousness operating through their subtle body. Inert objects like earth (the hills, mountains, stones), water (the oceans, lakes and rivers), fire, air and space cannot do that. Subtle bodies add much colour, variety and beauty to gross objects.

2 These divisions are not to be taken as applying to Brahman. They are mistakenly imagined to be the nature of God, but that is not so. The Supreme Brahman is unaffected by all the variety in creation, and ever remains the Pure Consciousness.

**3-4 Bhatti Bhaage Chitre:** “a painting on a wall”. This is a simile for the variety of objects. The painting contains various painted objects, both moving and unmoving. They all appear on the wall, but do not affect the wall. If the wall is destroyed, the painting also gets destroyed. The wall supports the painting. The wall is not concerned with what is painted on it, nor is it affected by the painting. In the same way, the Self is related to all the variety in creation. It is their Substratum, but remains aloof and unaffected by all objects in it.

**Verse 20:** *Witness-hood is Only a Pointer*

चेत्योपरागरूपा मे साक्षितापि न तात्त्विकी ।

उपलक्षणमेवेयं निस्तरङ्गचिदम्बुधेः

॥ २०॥

1	<i>chaityah uparaaga roopaa me,</i>	<i>Only a thought arising in the mind is My</i>
2	<i>saakshitaa api na taattvikee;</i>	<i>Witnesshood, too; it is not the Absolute.</i>
3	<i>upalakshanam eva iyam,</i>	<i>Witnesshood is only an (interim) pointer</i>
4	<i>nistaranga chid-ambudheh.</i>	<i>of the waveless ocean of Consciousness (that I am).</i>

The previous verse is applicable to those who prefer to take the *Srishti-Drishti* view which considers the world has to be interacted with. However, there are seekers who opt for the *Drishti-Srishti* view which considers that everything happens in the mind, i.e. in the world of their thoughts, and who ignore the outer world altogether. The present verse is written for this latter group of seekers.

**1** The practice among them is to observe their thoughts as their witness. They consider the Truth to be this Witnessing Consciousness. The Atman is said to be the ‘Witness of the three states’.

### **Need for ‘Inventing’ the Sakshi Concept**

**2-3** The key point made here is to tell us that the Witness-hood of the Self is a *temporary concept* aimed to help us turn our gaze inward and observe our thoughts and try to thin them out. Turning the mind inward from its natural inclination to run outward is a very difficult task. To assist the mind to do so, to make this task easier, the concept of ‘being their Witness’ was invented.

The Witness concept is a *Tatastha Lakshana* for the Self, not the *Swaroop Lakshana*. That is, it only indicates the Self, it does not define the Self. It is designed to draw our attention to the Self, not to describe who the Self is.

Witness-hood has to be seen as an interim stage to assist us to reach the Truth. It is a very useful aid to study the nature of thoughts arising in the mind. Once the mind has been thinned out and thoughts have come greatly under control, the concept of Witness-hood can be dropped. The Self is thought of as the Witness, but the Self is beyond all thought. It is given the role of a Witness as a temporary measure to help beginners.

Thoughts need to be trained in three aspects: in their quality, their quantity, and in their direction. All three are important, but for a *Sadhaka* the quantity is the first item that has to be reduced.

There are other cases of *Tatastha Lakshana* which Acharyaji brought to our notice, although not related to this text. One was the idea of Brahman as the Cause of the world.

This is also a Tatastha Lakshana. It is only with respect to the world, that Brahman is thought of in this manner. Brahman actually is not the cause of the world except in the sense of being the substratum of the world. Another example is the snake and rope. It is a Tatastha Lakshana for superimposition of the world on Brahman.

A Tatastha Lakshana is a pointer only and has to be discarded once it has done its work. With respect to Chaitya (pertaining to mind or Chitta) Consciousness is granted the status of a Witness.

**4** The Truth is Pure Consciousness, without a single ‘wave’ of thought. Pure Consciousness is that state wherein there are no thoughts, whereas in Witnesshood there is still the presence of thoughts. Witnesshood itself is a specialised form of thought.

**Verse 21: *Unaffected by the Unreal***

अमृताब्धेर्न मे जीर्णिर्मृषा डिण्डीरजन्मभिः ।

स्फटिकाद्रो मे रागः स्वाप्नसंध्याभ्रविभ्रमैः ॥ २१॥

1	<i>amrita abdeh na me jeernih,</i>	<i>To Me, the ocean of immortality, it is no loss</i>
2	<i>moorshaa dindeera janmabhih;</i>	<i>when ‘unreal’ waves rise or fall on Me;</i>
3	<i>sphatika adreh na me raagah,</i>	<i>To Me, the mountain of pure crystal, it is no taint</i>
4	<i>swapna sandhya abhra-vibhramaih.</i>	<i>when whirls of ‘unreal’ evening clouds pass by.</i>

This verse gives us two beautiful and inspiring analogies that tell us what Pure Consciousness is like. They can be taken as Swaroopa Lakshanas. The poet reaches out to his readers in poetry that describes the majestic aloofness of the Supreme Consciousness from the restless motion of creation that goes on all around Him. There is great charm in the two similes used here to paint a picture of tranquility in the midst of the ever-surging bustle of activity. The similes create a picture in our mind of a towering Himalayan sage seated unruffled in his meditation Asana, absorbed in the Superconscious State.

**The Ocean Simile: A Picture of Calmness**

**1-2** The all-knowing Consciousness is a picture of calm, stable reassurance. Waves of illusion may dash upon the silent, calm mind of the realized sage but they do affect him. They do not add to his majesty nor take anything away from him. The ocean does not mind the waves upon it doing their eternal dance, in tune or out of tune with the rhythm of Life. Deep and vast, self-contented, it allows everything to happen to it, yet remains unaffected.

The ocean waves represent in microscopic detail all the activities that living beings get up to, arising mostly from deep Ignorance and destined to die off making no dent to this vast universe represented by the ocean. The unreality of their existence shines through this magnificent simile. In fact, the poet does not even give it the little reality of a wave – they are considered to be mere “foam” tickling the toes of Consciousness!

**The Mountain Simile: A Picture of Towering Purity**

**3-4** The second simile captures the aloofness of the meditating sage. His mental state is unruffled by desires which ravage the hearts of lesser beings. The stamp of purity marks him out as a God among men. Among mountains He stands out as one made wholly in pure, clear crystal. What an awesome sight already presents itself to our imagination!

The picture does not end there. In the twilight hours, when his fellowmen return to their homes to enjoy the pebbles of pleasure they have worked for, the sage is sitting entranced in meditation, towering above them with his grand vision of life. The multi-coloured clouds that gather at this time send a captivating and enticing call to him, but he is uncharmed by their seductive beauty. Sunset rates as one of the great spectacles in Nature, and richly does the sage deserve such a treat. But purity that he is, it does not draw him into devious channels of frivolity. His attention is ever fixed steadfastly on the Supreme Brahman that radiates through every pore of his Being.

There is really no need to analyse this verse; to appreciate its poetry will suffice. We have done it justice already. A die-hard Vedantin may add that the ocean example represents the implied meaning of Tat ('That') and the crystal mountain example represents the same for Twam ('Thou') in the 'Tat Twam Asi' Mahavakya. Of course, he will not be wrong in saying so, but have the ocean and the mountain not already done that?

With the imagery of peace, aloofness and tranquillity ringing in our minds, we bring our relationship to the world to a grand conclusion. Now we are ready to dive deep into our heart and experience the essence of our Being – the Supreme Brahman.

---

\*\*\*\*\*





## 8. BRAHMAN IS SATCHIDANANDA

(verses 22-24, 3 no.)

IN THE THREE VERSES OF this section, we view Brahman directly by noting His own nature. This is called Swaroopa Lakshnana, i.e. Brahman's nature is indicated directly – as best as can be expressed in *words*. These verses emphatically declare that the Supreme Being is of the nature of Existence-Consciousness-Bliss Absolute.

**Verse 22:** *Existence is My Very Nature*

स्वरूपमेव मे सत्त्वं न तु धर्मो नभस्त्ववत् ।  
मदन्यस्य सतोऽभावान्न हि सा जातिरिष्यते ॥ २२॥

1	<i>swaroopam eva me sattwam,</i>	<b>EXISTENCE</b> is my (the Atman's) very <u>nature</u> ,
2	<i>na tu dharmah nabhastvavat;</i>	not just my <u>quality</u> ; as space-ness is the very nature of space.
3	<i>mat anyasya satah abhaavaan,</i>	There is no existence apart from me. (If it were my quality, it would be apart from me),
4	<i>na hi sat jaatih ishyate.</i>	Nor can Existence be considered as a <u>category</u> . (If it were a category, there would be two existences!)

### **Objection Preceding the Verse:**

There is a commonly recurring objection which draws out verses like this from the Kavi. The objector says: "If Brahman has existence as His quality, then what is there to prevent Him from undergoing modifications? Everything that exists has 'existence' and they are all subject to modification. So why should Brahman, too, not be subject to the same, like every other thing? If He does not, then we might as well call Him 'Non-existence'!"

This is like the same objection that was answered in Verse 13, now entering through the backdoor. The Kavi returns it with a back-handed volley!

**1** Vedanta has always said that Brahman is Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute by definition. Brahman's aspect as Existence makes Him the support of all that has existence. He is the very Existence (**Sat**) of everything!

**2** This is very different from saying Brahman has existence. There is a big difference. If He had existence, then existence would be one of His qualities, not something inherent in Him. This is the objector's contention.

The example of Space is given to support Brahman as Existence. The space-ness of Space is its very nature; it is not a quality of Space. A quality of Space would be the fact that it provides room for other elements, and that it conveys sound vibrations. Existence has no such other qualities.

**3** If Existence changes, that is, if it undergoes any modification, then the existence of everything in this world will change accordingly. We will be living another kind of life than

we are at present. Our very constancy will fluctuate! It would be unimaginable to think of such a change. It simply cannot happen. It can happen only if Existence is considered to be a quality of the Atman.

**4** The Bhashya raises a second point to defend Vedanta's concept of Brahman. If not a quality, can Existence be a Jaati or 'category'? In a category, there will be more than one item. Brahman is one without a second. It cannot have another Brahman to compete with it. Clearly, the objector is trying to undermine the very definition of Brahman. He wants there to be many Brahman and thus show that Vedanta is a meaningless fallacy.

The objector really wishes to measure Brahman by his own small standard of existence. He cannot dream of the grand Principle of Existence itself being the Reality, and the substratum of all creation. It seems to be too much for him to imagine. Even if he just grasps this fact intellectually, it will revolutionise his life, not to speak of actually attaining a state of oneness with that Supreme Existence!

Without getting into any intellectual games, the truth of having one unchanging Existence is the most rational response to this objection. The Vedantic Truth is in harmony with our experience of ourselves: Do we ever feel that we are more than one person? It would be absurd for us to even think so. "I am", is always with reference to a single person known as 'me'. That is Existence.

**Verse 23: Consciousness is My Very Nature**

स्वरूपमेव मे ज्ञानं न गुणः स गुणो यदि ।

अनात्मत्वमसत्त्वं वा ज्ञेयाज्ञेयत्वयोः पतेत्

॥ २३॥

1	<i>swaroopam eva me jnaanam,</i>	<b>CONSCIOUSNESS</b> is my (the Atman's) very <u>nature</u> ,
2	<i>na gunah sah gunah yadi;</i>	<b>not just my quality</b> . If it were only a quality, (the question arises whether Atman is illumined by it or not).
3	<i>anaatmatwam asattwam vaa,</i>	(if illumined), Atman becomes ' <b>not-Self</b> ', or (if not illumined), Atman becomes ' <b>non-existent</b> '.
4	<i>jneya (patet), ajneya tvayoh patet.</i>	(if Atman is not-Self) It becomes an ' <u>object of knowledge</u> '; (if Atman is non-existent) it becomes an ' <u>unknowable</u> '.

Firstly we consider the meaning of the verse itself, then the Bhashya.

**1** As with Existence, here, too, the fact is stated first: Consciousness is the very nature of the Atman, i.e. Atman is Consciousness, not Atman has consciousness.

To understand the remaining three Padas, words have been added into the translation in brackets to follow the logic implied by the verse. The detailed explanation is:

**2** Consciousness is not a quality possessed by the Atman. If it were a quality, then the knowing or illumining function is taken away from the Atman. This raises two possibilities. i) Either that knowing function illumines the Atman; or ii) it does not.

**3** i) If the 'quality of consciousness' illumines the Atman, then the Atman, by definition, becomes an inert object and is reduced to the status of **not-Self**.

ii) On the other hand, if the 'quality of consciousness' does not illumine the Atman, then the Atman is never known. In such a case, as we had already seen earlier, the Atman

has to be regarded as ‘**non-existent**’. The reason is that a thing which cannot be known is as good as non-existent.

**4** Now we take these conclusions a little deeper:]

i) If the Atman is reduced to not-Self, then it is an inert object and becomes a mere object of knowledge, known in the same way as any other object in the world.

ii) If the Atman is non-existent, then, by definition, it can never be known, and that results in it becoming an unknowable.

The conclusion is that Consciousness is the very nature of the Atman, not its quality. That covers the detailed interpretation of the verse. Now we go to the Bhashya.

#### **Objections Raised in the Bhashya:**

The Bhashya puts forward a series of models of what the Self could possibly be like. It does this in the form of a conversation between an objector and a Vedantin:

**Objection No 1:** Does Consciousness become objectified or not? Can you consider the Self to be separate from Consciousness?

Reply: If the Self is ‘known’ by the Consciousness, it becomes an object, and hence like a pot it becomes part of the not-Self. If it is not known, then it becomes non-existent. So this way of looking at Consciousness cannot work.

**Objection No 2:** Then let us consider the Self to have Consciousness as part of it, say, in one separate compartment of it. Then at least the knowledge is still in the Self.

Reply: No, even that will not work as it will have the same defect as before. The Self will still be an object of that part of it called Consciousness.

But you are getting closer to the Truth. Instead of saying Consciousness is part of the Self, why not say Consciousness is the whole of the Self? That will be on the spot.

After all, what are the conditions for being the Self? It has to have awareness. This is fulfilled – the Self becomes awareness itself in this model. Let us not complicate it any further; no other condition is required.

**Objection No 3:** “I know the object” – that is my experience. I don’t feel that is the Atman’s knowledge. It is my Ahamkara or Ego that tells me that.

Reply: The Ego’s knowledge is very different from that of the Self. The former comes and goes. It cannot belong to the Self. This is not the kind of knowledge that Self has. The Self’s knowledge is constant, not fluctuating. It is Pure Awareness. The *Brahma Sutras* of Veda Vyasa say “Self is Pure Knowledge”. Vidyanaraya also confirms this.

**Objection No 4:** The Nyaya says, “Self is both inert and sentient. In deep sleep it is inert, we have no knowledge, so I am Jada. In the waking state it is alert and conscious so it knows. It is then sentient. Does this not prove that Atman is both?”

Reply: Again the answer is ‘No’. The Atman is Brahman, it is Chidroopa or of the nature of Consciousness. Even in sleep, it is there as witness; it does not disappear. That awareness makes us remember that we had a good sleep. What you mean is that Duality is not there. That is because Duality is caused by the Ego, and it is Ego that is not there in sleep, so we do not experience Duality. Consciousness is always present.

**Objection No 5:** “You say that the Atman is self-effulgent. How does it know itself? If it does know itself, there is a serious problem – the Atman becomes the subject and the object at the same time, an illogical situation indeed! And if it cannot know itself, then that becomes proof that it does *not* exist – equally absurd!”

Reply: The Self knows itself without having to become an object. The logic behind that is now presented at length in the Bhashya:

### **Non-Objectified Knowledge**

Being self-aware, the Self knows itself, not as an object but as *knowledge* itself. Sri Vidyanaraya is quoted in support of this statement. He says, “Self is awareness, it is of the nature of knowledge and does not need the help of anything to know. It cannot be illumined by something else. There is no triad here of knower, knowledge and the object known. All three have merged into Consciousness. Because of His Grace the entire world is illumined. If the Self were not present, we will not be able to know anything. It is the presiding *Chairperson* over all knowledge.”

The Self cannot be remembered or forgotten. Try to remember or forget yourself – it just cannot be done. The teeth may forget that there is a tongue, and bite it; the hand may forget that it has an injury and try to lift something; but no one forgets that ‘he IS’.

The Self is also said to have no attributes – it simply *is there*. The word Witness used often for the Self is just to indicate its nature of knowing. We have seen already that witness-hood is a temporary view with reference to the thoughts.

In this manner, Sri Lakshmidhar Kavi and Sri Swayamprakash Yati deal with this verse exhaustively, thus helping the enquiring mind to clear its doubts on the subject.

### **Verse 24:      *Bliss is Myself***

अहमेव सुखं नान्यदन्यच्चेन्नैव तत् सुखम् ।

अमदर्थं न हि प्रेयो मदर्थं न स्वतः प्रियम्                      ॥ २४ ॥

1	<i>aham-eva sukham na anyad,</i>	<b>BLISS</b> is myself and <b>not different</b> from me.
2	<i>anyad chet na eva tat sukham;</i>	If it were different, it cannot be Bliss at all.
3	<i>amadartham na hi preyah,</i>	If it is <u>not for me</u> , it would not be dear;
4	<i>madartham na swatah priyam.</i>	and if it is <u>for me</u> , it is not dear by itself.

Everyone is seeking happiness. But happiness can be viewed in so many ways and that adds greatly to many doubts about it. To eliminate the bulk of the doubts raised by the ordinary view of happiness as something obtained from some sense pleasure or material contentment, sages have provided a technical word for true *spiritual happiness* – it is the word **Sukham**, translated into English as “Bliss”. The more common word is ‘**ANANDA**’.

“Is Bliss Myself or am I seeking it?” This narrows all the doubt about Bliss to a single question. As with Existence and Consciousness, Bliss, too, is nothing short of the Supreme Reality itself. It is not a quality different from ‘me’, but “I am Bliss itself”. Sri Lakshmidhar Kavi’s logic to explain exactly what true spiritual Bliss is, is itself a stroke of intellectual genius. Its simplicity resolves the complexity in understanding Bliss.

**1** Yes, Bliss is Myself. It has to be myself. How can it be other than me? The implication of Bliss being different from me is that it then becomes a **quality** describing something that I experience. The same pattern of logic is used to explain this as has just been used for Existence and Consciousness in the previous two verses.

**2** The moment Bliss is seen as a quality of the Atman, we have the same difficulty as we had for Existence and Consciousness. Two options open up before us and they have to be carefully examined. In both of them we discover that Bliss is not possible if we see it as different from me. The two options are:

**3 i) “It is Not For Me”:** In common English, this means “I am not seeking it”. Why am I not seeking it? Because it does not have any promise of happiness for me. That is the principle we saw at the beginning in Verse 2. Why should I be seeking something which is not going to make me happy? It must be because it has no Bliss.

**4 ii) “It is For Me”:** This means “I am seeking it”, which in turn means that there is anticipated happiness to be obtained from it. In such a case, the verse tells us that “it is not dear by itself”, which in common English means that the happiness we expect to get from it is not an intrinsic part of me, but lies outside me.

Such an object of happiness will not be dear *always*. It may bring happiness at most times, but the same object will also bring unhappiness at certain times. For example, an ice cream may bring happiness but too many will start making me feel uncomfortable. Similarly, my wife or husband may give me much happiness but there will also be times when the reverse is true. How can such happiness be true spiritual Bliss?

### **Insights from the Bhashya**

The Bhashya first goes into an analysis of the sources of happiness. There can be only four sources of happiness:

- i) The Atman or me;
- ii) that which is dear to me;
- iii) that which is not dear to me; and
- iv) that towards which I am indifferent.

The last two options are clearly not bringing me happiness. We have seen this in verse 2. Hence, they need not take up any more of our time. The second option, things which are dear, we have just seen are not constantly dear. They have their ups and downs; they are *changeable*. The only option left is the Atman.

Thus we may conclude that *Bliss is within, in the Self*. The happiness within is constant, not ‘moody’, not coming and going, not increasing or diminishing.

Having shown that true Bliss lies within me, the Bhashya resolves two objections that are raised against this conclusion.

**Objection No 1:** An objector says, “I feel that the Self is not happiness itself, but a means to getting happiness. I say that because I do not feel happy always. If the Self is happiness, then I should be feeling happy always.”

**Reply:** If you see Self as a means to happiness that is as good as saying it is an ‘object’ of happiness. We have already seen that happiness does not lie in objects. Why do you love yourself? Is it because you think it is giving you bliss? If you make the Self the means to happiness then it implies the Self is meant to serve something. So the next question is, “For whom is the Self there to be enjoyed? That Enjoyer would then be the Self.”

Let us take an example of an external object. The common example of “garlands, ornaments, etc” stands for all that makes people happy – namely, wealth, fame and sexual pleasure. These objects cannot enjoy themselves. They are there supposedly to make someone happy, to *serve* that person. Applying this to the Self, we find that the Atman is the means of enjoying as well as the enjoyer. Such a situation can only arise if the Atman itself is of the very nature of Bliss.

**Objection No 2:** “You have to still answer why I do not feel that Bliss always.”

Reply: That is simply because you are not really in touch with your Self. Somehow you have got strongly attached to a false Self, who is called the Ego, and who has ignorantly associated itself with the body and mind, and is desperately trying to get the happiness it wants by finding it in objects known to the body and mind. Deep inside even the Ego knows it will be satisfied only by lasting happiness, but it does not know where to obtain it.

Finally the Bhashya closes with numerous quotations from great saints, particularly Sri Sarvajnatma Muni, Sri Vidyaranya (author of *Panchadasi*), the *Brahma Geeta*, and Rishi Yajnavalkya. All these reliable and well-known sources confirm that the Atman or Self is by nature Bliss itself.

---

\*\*\*\*\*



## 9. “TAT TWAM ASI” ANALYSIS

(verses 25-27, 3 no.)

HAVING COMPLETED ALL THE logical explanations thus far, we come to the point at which we can now obtain the meaning of the “*Tat Twam Asi*” Mahavakya of the *Upanishads*. All the groundwork has been done; all doubts have been painstakingly cleared; now it just remains to piece together all the logic to grasp the significance of this sentence.

[*Vakya Vritti* (Text 25) and *Vedanta Sara* (Text 22) contain in greater detail the same reasoning. *Tattwa Bodha* (Text 2) gives an elementary explanation.]

### Verse 25:     *The Method of Interpreting “Tat Twam Asi”*

न हि नानास्वरूपं स्यादेकं वस्तु कदाचन ।  
तस्मादखण्ड एवास्मि विजहज्जागतीं भिदाम्                      ॥ २५॥

1	<i>na hi naanaa swaroopam syaad,</i>	<i>To have many natures is not possible</i>
2	<i>ekam vastu kadaachana;</i>	<i>at all for the one same Reality.</i>
3	<i>tasmaad akhanda eva asmi,</i>	<i>Therefore, undivided do I remain (exist),</i>
4	<i>vijahad jagateem bhidaam.</i>	<i>discarding differences that belong to the world.</i>

This verse outlines the method of interpreting the Mahavakya “*Tat Twam Asi*”. It is a Four-Step Method. Each Pada of the verse stands for a different Step. The 4 Steps are:

**1** Every word has a *direct* or *literal* meaning called the **Vachyarthā**. When the three words of Satchidananda are interpreted with their direct meanings, all three mean different things. If we accept these meanings, it means that the Supreme has three natures, at the least. But this is not acceptable. Step 1 of the Method is thus to reject the possibility of the Supreme having *many* natures.

**2** Step 2 is to positively assert that the Reality can have only one nature. Vedanta teaches that the three terms together point to the one Reality. The word **Vastu** here is defined as “that which IS”. Generally, it could refer to any thing among many things. Here it specifically indicates the One and only Supreme Reality, the non-dual Brahman. This is to emphasise the point that Brahman has one nature, not many natures; and that nature is not its quality but itself.

**3** **Akhanda**: “*undivided*”. Since the direct meanings fail us, we now move on to the implied meaning, called the **Lakshyarthā**. Step 3 is to find out what implied meaning suits the sentence to make sense of it. There are many possibilities for implied meanings. The implied meaning for the three terms in Satchidananda is given in this line – it is nothing short of the Absolute Brahman. “Undivided” stands for Non-duality, one without a second.

**4** And finally we come to the practical Sadhana or spiritual practice of moving from the direct to the implied meaning. This is Step 4 of the Method. This is the most difficult step of all; the previous three are theoretical only. All meanings which stand contradictory to the



above, i.e. all differences, are rejected. One has to go beyond the limitations of one's individuality and merge with the universality. This requires sincere and earnest practice of meditation on one's true nature or the Self.

### **Application to "Tat Twam Asi"**

This is the Mahavakya where the implied meaning is the only way of obtaining the true significance of it. Satchidananda is the implied meaning of both "Tat" and "Twam".

We summarise the Bhashya on the word Satchidananda. The first thing explained is to show the inadequacy of the direct meanings. This is done by showing that all three words are actually referring to the same Reality. Each word, without the other two, is incomplete. This is proved by taking all possible combinations of the words. We get SIX equations:

<p><b>SAT – CHIT – ANANDA</b>  <i>Existence – Knowledge – Bliss</i></p>
---

<b><u>SAT &amp; JNANA COMBINATION:</u></b>		
1.	<b>SAT – JNANA = JADA</b>	<b>⇒ ASAT</b> i.e opposite of SAT.
2.	<b>JNANA – SAT = ASAT</b>	<b>⇒ AJNANA</b> i.e. opposite of JNANA.
<b><u>JNANA &amp; ANANDA COMBINATION:</u></b>		
3.	<b>JNANA – ANANDA = JADA</b>	<b>⇒ AJNANA</b> i.e. opp of JNANA.
4.	<b>ANANDA – JNANA = JADA</b>	<b>⇒ NA-ANANDA</b> i.e. opp of ANANDA.
<b><u>SAT &amp; ANANDA COMBINATION:</u></b>		
5.	<b>ANANDA – SAT = ASAT</b>	<b>⇒ NA-ANANDA</b> i.e. opp of ANANDA.
6.	<b>SAT – ANANDA = JADA</b>	<b>⇒ ASAT</b> i.e. opp of SAT.

The same analysis can be done for another set of three qualities, namely:

<p><b>NITYA – MUKTA – SHUDDHA</b>  <i>Eternal – Free – Pure</i></p>
---

<b><u>NITYA &amp; MUKTA COMBINATION:</u></b>		
7.	<b>NITYA – MUKTA = BANDHAN</b>	<b>⇒ ANITYA</b> i.e opp of Nitya.
8.	<b>MUKTA – NITYA = ANITYA</b>	<b>⇒ BANDHAN</b> i.e. opp of Mukta.
<b><u>MUKTA &amp; SHUDDHA COMBINATION:</u></b>		
9.	<b>MUKTA – SHUDDHA = ASHUDDHA</b>	<b>⇒ BANDHAN</b> i.e. opp of Mukta.
10.	<b>SHUDDHA – MUKTA = BANDHAN</b>	<b>⇒ ASHUDDHA</b> i.e. opp of Shuddha.
<b><u>NITYA &amp; SHUDDHA COMBINATION:</u></b>		
11.	<b>SHUDDHA – NITYA = ANITYA</b>	<b>⇒ ASHUDDHA</b> i.e. opp of Shuddha.
12.	<b>NITYA – SHUDDHA = ASHUDDHA</b>	<b>⇒ ANITYA</b> i.e. opp of Nitya.

These are three qualities, not natures of the Self, but they too are so interlinked that without the other two each one becomes its opposite.

**Conclusion:** Thus we conclude with the statement that all three words, which have different word meanings, have the same implied or indicative meaning – the Self. All three words complement each other, and cannot do without each other.

**Objection No 1:** “Why do we use all three together? That still has to be explained.”

**Reply:** The following table explains why all three are used together. It is because each term reveals a different Kosha of an object, namely grossness, subtlety and causality:

<u>TERM</u>	<u>KOSHA</u>	<u>What Is Revealed?</u>
<b>SAT</b> (Existence).	Annamaya	Grossness
<b>CHIT</b> (Consciousness).	Vijnana-, Mano- and Prana-maya	Subtlety
<b>ANANDA</b> (Bliss).	Anandamaya	Causality

The Bhashya gives us a further classification of meanings. They can be divided into *Mukhya* and *Amukhya* (Primary and Secondary) meanings:

<u>THE WORD</u>	<u>MUKHYA ARTHA</u> Implied Meaning (Primary)	<u>AMUKHYA ARTHA</u> Literal Meaning (Secondary)
<b>SAT</b>	Satya Roopa (Existence)	Akasha
<b>CHIT</b>	Chaitanya (Consciousness)	Antahkarana Vritti
<b>ANANDA</b>	Pratyak (inner Bliss)	Priya, Moda, Pramoda

Pujya Sarvajnatma Muni uses the sentence “*Satyam Jnanam Anandam Brahma*” to illustrate how one has to choose between *Mukhya* and *Amukhya* Artha in every sentence.

### **Differentiating the Use of Literal & Implied Meanings**

**Objection No 2:** “Some may take only the direct meaning to mean Brahman. Then what? For example, an indulgent person would say, ‘Eat, drink and be merry – that is the meaning of Ananda’. He takes the literal meaning.”

**Reply:** No! This is clearly a deliberate misunderstanding. One has to be very careful when using the direct meaning. All this is only meant to help us, not to give us an excuse to be confused and do the wrong things!

**Objection No 3:** “When do we take these words to mean one thing, the Lakshyartha; and when do we take them to be separate, their Vachyartha?”

**Reply:** If all three qualities clearly are meant together, the Lakshyartha has to be used. If they are intended separately then Vachyartha is used. For example, “*Agni Simha Brahmachari*” – Agni and Simha are adjectives for the Brahmachari. The Brahmachari could be fiery like fire or he could be brave like a lion. In this case the words can be taken separately. The Vachyartha is meant. The word ‘Simha’ could be dropped, or ‘Agni’ could be dropped without affecting the meaning of the sentence.

In all objects in this world, differences are due to Upadhis. If one can see beyond the Upadhis, then differences are removed. Then the indicative meaning is meant. This simple rule will avoid any confusion in selecting the meaning in a given context.

This discussion is to teach us by logical means that in ‘Satchidananda’ all three terms are taken together and it indicates Brahman and Brahman alone, nothing else.

**Verse 26:      *The Implied Meaning of “Tat”***

परोक्षतापरिच्छेदशाबल्यापोहनिर्मलम् ।  
तदसीति गिरा लक्ष्यमहमेकरसं महः

॥ २६॥

1	<i>parokshataa paricchheda,</i>	<i>When the <u>conditionings</u> of remoteness and limitations</i>
2	<i>shaabalya apoha nirmalam;</i>	<i>are removed from the Immaculate One (Ishwara),</i>
3	<i>‘tat asi’ iti giraa lakshyam,</i>	<i>we get the meaning of ‘That Art’, as indicated by Srutis.</i>
4	<i>‘aham-eka-rasam mahah’.</i>	<i>That, the great Light of Consciousness, is me.</i>

**The Literal Meaning of “Tat”**

We keep in mind that the concept of Ishwara or God is from the standpoint of man. ‘That’ and ‘This’ are relative to the individual man.

**1 Parokshataa:** This verse deals with ‘That’, Ishwara or the Creator. He is “remote”, far away, hard to reach even mentally; the other, Jiva or ‘This’, the individual soul, is near, immediate, and easy to reach as it is our own limited self. How do we equate these two apparently contradictory factors? It startles anyone at first glance. But there must be something profound which the sentence is trying to convey to us. After all, it is none other than the Upanishads that are saying it – the authority is undeniable.

We always feel instinctively that God is high above us. At the same time we have a feeling of inadequacy when we think of the purity and strength of God. We are puny and impure creatures in comparison. In so many ways we are far, far below the level of God. How is it that the scriptures are declaring equality between the two?

**2 Nirmala:** “immaculate”. This refers to the greatness and purity which we have endowed upon Ishwara. When we consider the ‘greatness’ of God in the same way as we consider the ‘smallness’ of man, we see that whatever we lack we have ascribed to Him in abundant measure; we have endowed Him with superhuman qualities.

In other words, God’s greatness is relative to man’s smallness. God’s Upadhis are ascribed to Him by man; When seen in this light, we see that we have, as it were, *made God in our image!* We have defined Him as being awesome, omniscient, etc. If these Upadhis of God are removed, what do we get?

**3** When the Upadhis that we have superimposed upon Ishwara are removed, what remains is what the scriptures declare as the implied meaning of ‘That’. What is it?

**4** It is the pure Truth or ‘Light of Consciousness’ behind the greatness of God. We find that the universal, Supreme Reality, the Non-dual Brahman underlies ‘Tat’. This is the implied meaning of ‘Tat’ in *Tat Twam Asi*. As an equation we can write it as follows:

**Ishwara – His Upadhis = “Tat” or BRAHMAN**

### WHY “IMPLIED” MEANINGS ARE CHOSEN

It makes an interesting study to compare ‘*Sat-chid-ananda*’ with ‘*Tat Twam Asi*’.

In the case of **Satchidananda**, we have three words of similar meaning. Despite their similarity, we drop their separate, superficial, literal meanings and turn to their joint, deeper, implied meaning as Brahman.

In the case of **Tat Twam Asi**, we have two words of dissimilar meaning. At the gross and subtle levels, these two words are diametrically opposite each other. Yet, again we drop their separate, superficial, literal meanings and turn to their joint, deeper, implied meaning as Brahman, the ‘Light of Consciousness’.

This comparison brings to light the fact that the literal meanings are dropped (or implied meanings are chosen), regardless of similarity or dissimilarity, but because the identity we are looking for lies at a deeper level, not the superficial level. The external qualities, be they *differences* or *similarities*, have to be given up. Only then is the underlying Truth reached and where the identity lies. That is why literal meanings are dropped.

This teaches us an important lesson: It tells us that even supposing man could be equated with God at the external level, i.e. both were “great, omnipotent, omniscient, etc”, their spiritual identity would not lie in those qualities, but in their underlying Substratum which is their common Spiritual essence.

The significance of this is that many great men have tried to be equal to God at the external level, and claimed to be immortal, all-powerful, etc. However much they may try to equate themselves at the surface levels, that can never have any meaning whatsoever, for the true identity is solely at the deeper, spiritual level. The same Reality underlies all.

The scriptures declare without any doubt: “There is not even the faintest bit of difference between Jiva and Brahman in essence.” To remove the external conditioning, the Rishis were not hesitant to go to any extent. They were not afraid to carry out this bit of surgery on themselves. When the operation (the **Tapas** or austerity) is done, however painful it may be, the equality is clearly seen.

The Bhashya concludes this verse, and with it the entire teaching of the text, with the words: “Thus through Sruti (scriptures), Yukti (logical analysis) and Bahujnya (the words of the sages and Rishis), we have proved beyond all doubt that there is complete non-duality in Brahman, and this is undeniable proof that Atman and Brahman are One.”

#### Verse 27:      “*Twam*” Explained

उपशान्तजगज्जीवशिष्याचार्येश्वरभ्रमम् ।

स्वतः सिद्धमनाद्यन्तं परिपूर्णमहं महः

॥ २७॥

1	<i>upashaanta jagat, jeeva, shishya,</i>	<b>Negation</b> of all ideas of world, Jiva, disciple,
2	<i>aachaarya, eeshwara bhramam;</i>	teacher, Lord – taking them as <u>delusion</u> – is done.
3	<i>swatah siddham anaadi-antam,</i>	As Self-established, without beginning and end, and
4	<i>paripoornam aham mahah.</i>	all-full do I remain ‘ <u>the Light of Consciousness</u> ’!

### The Literal Meaning of “Twam”

Now is explained the literal and implied meanings of “**Twam**”.

**1-2** The superficial, literal meanings have to be negated. What does this entail?

Firstly, all our connections and ideas of **Jagat**, the world, need to be reviewed thoroughly. Until we are able to behold only the pure Consciousness in everything in the world, we have to continue with the process of negating it.

The Individual soul, the **Jiva**, also has to be stripped of all its gross and subtle components. This means all thoughts, words and deeds need to be looked at. We are required to detach ourselves from connection to them, for they are not the true “I”.

Going a step further, even that which brought us onto the spiritual path and which we therefore consider sacred and hold on to as our anchorage during our engagements with the world, have also to be relinquished in the final analysis. Our ideas of being a disciple, having a Guru, and having the Lord as our supreme Guide – all of them need to be negated. This includes abandoning the scriptures, too, at the very end. They also belong to the category of “external props” which are needed to serve a purpose, but which have to be given up when their purpose has been served.

**3-4** When all these superficials connected to our life are negated, then what remains? That which is non-negatable alone remains. What is that? It is the Light of Truth, the Light of Consciousness, the Supreme Brahman, the Non-dual Reality – that alone remains. The negation forces us to recognise this Reality. The negation strips off all that prevented us from beholding the Reality that was always there but hidden.

Nothing new has been discovered; what was always there has only been uncovered.

### THE IDENTITY OF “TAT” & “TWAM”

Whilst the previous verse dealt with the term ‘That’, this verse deals with the term ‘This’ in an identical manner. We are now ready to consider the identity of the two.

We have seen that the deeper implied meanings of “Tat” and “Twam” are the same. They both refer to the same Ultimate Reality.

The Sruti, always ready to explain this Truth to those who approach Her with faith, is considered with reverence as our Divine Mother for this very reason. She lovingly and patiently holds aloft this Truth before us until we directly experience it ourselves. Then She Herself asks us to abandon Her!

Atman is the very essence of our Being, our very soul, our core. Brahman, on the other hand, is all-pervading, associated with **Ananta** or Infinity. Logically, however, if Brahman excludes Atman, it would not be Infinite; and if Atman excludes Brahman, then the Atman will not be **Sarvantara** or the Indwelling Presence in all beings. This fact itself is the strongest logical reason why Brahman and Atman have to be one and the same.

Pujya Sarvajnatma Muni also concurs with this view: “In Brahman, Atman is there; and in the same way Atman is in Brahman because Brahman is non-dual.” Thus there is absolutely no room for difference between these two. Logically they have to be one. We saw earlier what would happen if they were not the same.

### **CONCLUDING COMMENTS ON SPIRITUAL LIFE**

In the Bhashya, the connecting link to this verse tells us of the purpose of this text and of Vedanta itself: It is to remove all our doubts on this very difficult path; to eliminate all false notions that still tie us down to our ignorance; and to spur us on to diligently do the Sadhana which will culminate in the realization of Brahman, that is, in Jivanmukti or liberation.

The spiritual path is pursued in order that we are liberated from the delusions listed in this verse. One may understand eliminating the false conceptions of the world and our own Ego. But included in this list are the ideas of being a disciple, of having a teacher and even all our ideas of Ishwara or God, the Creator.

What this is intended to tell us is that all superimpositions are to be removed, right up to the Upadhis of Ishwara, so that we can identify our essential nature with that of God. The Apavada (tearing down of the Upadhis) has to be complete, leaving no trace of any sense of limitations behind. The goal is nothing short of complete identity with Brahman – achieved in the seat of meditation.

### **JIVANMUKTI, VIDEHAMUKTI & KRAMAMUKTI**

To round off the teaching, Acharyaji took special pains to clarify our ideas about the Jivanmukta, the Videhamukta and the Kramamukta:

i) **Jivanmukta**: This is one who has had the direct experience of Brahman, and who is completely liberated from the life of Samsara. This is the goal of Vedanta – no more births and deaths. The Jivanmukta is still subject to his remaining Prarabdha Karmas.

ii) **Videhamukta**: The term applies to a Jivanmukta. When even his Prarabdha Karmas come to an end, he attains Videhamukti. He is now free even from the limitation imposed upon him by his body. In Videhamukti he merges totally with the Supreme Brahman.

iii) **Krama Mukti**: This is “sequential liberation”. This is attained in “steps” by a devoted spiritual seeker who has long practised the Upasanas, accumulated much spiritual merit, and purified himself through selfless deeds dedicated to God. Desiring to go to higher worlds, he gains the Punya or merit to go there. He finally goes to Brahmaloaka where he gets instructed by Brahmaji in Self-knowledge and gets liberated. Or, he may choose to come back to earth, continue his Sadhana and attain liberation here.

\*\*\*\*\*



## 10. CONCLUSION

(verse 28, 1 no.)

**Verse 28:** *The Nectar of Advaita*

लक्ष्मीधरकवेः सूक्तिशरदम्भोजसम्भृतः ।

अद्वैतमकरन्दोज्यं विद्वद्भ्रङ्गैर्निपीयताम्

॥ २८॥

1	<i>lakshmeedhara-kaveh sookti,</i>	<i>These verses of the poet Lakshmidhara Kavi,</i>
2	<i>sharad-ambhoja-sambhritah;</i>	<i>are like autumnal lotuses.</i>
3	<i>advaita-makarandah ayam,</i>	<i>May the 'Nectar of Non-duality' present in them</i>
4	<i>vidvad bhringaih nipeeyataam.</i>	<i>be joyfully drunk by all the 'bees' of wise men!</i>

**1** The text has concluded. The entire scope of Vedanta has been summarized in it, with a special emphasis on the logic behind the Vedanta principles.

The Kavi used to serve in the court of King Bhoja as the King's poet. It was the King who requested the poet to write a concise text to remove his doubts. This book was the result of that request.

**2** The verses of this text are compared to lotus flowers. The autumnal flowers are the best for making honey, being rich in nectar after the monsoonal rains and heat of summer.

**3-4** Now, at the end of the text, the great Kavi extends an invitation to all the learned ones, to all Sadhakas, to all spiritual seekers, to come and drink to their heart's content from the hive of the honey of the nectar of Advaita that he has prepared for them in this book.

As Acharyaji enthusiastically expressed it, "Sri Lakshmidhar Kavi is throwing a party and is calling all the 'bees' of wise people to join in and get drunk on this Advaita nectar!" The non-dual Truth is the main item on the menu at this party.

In the Bhashya, more is said of the glory of partaking of such a treat laid out by the Kavi. Those endowed with the proper qualities, who have the thirst for this knowledge, will drink from this fountain and enjoy everlasting happiness. Only from knowing Brahman can one enjoy such happiness.

The bees are those thirsty spiritual seekers. They know where to find the nectar. They will come to it no matter how difficult the journey, and drink their fill. How much has to be drunk? The Kavi says, "Until the knowledge dawns, go on drinking!" Sri Bharati Teertha interprets 'drinking' to mean Self-enquiry, and says, "Even after enquiry, if you do not abide in the Self, repeatedly enquire – 'go on drinking' – till the knowledge dawns."

In great humility, Sri Swayamprakash Yati concludes the Bhashya, saying, "Each verse has so much nectar in it that I could go on writing. But I am stopping here because I am afraid it might become too big! I have written this for the benefit of those who are struggling to think clearly about these glorious Truths. To help them think for themselves, I have written this Bhashya. I have tried to keep it simple and 'user-friendly'."



Note: A further six verses appear at the end of the book, and another two were given to us by Acharyaji. These verses are the Bhashyakara's thanksgiving and glorification of the knowledge contained in this great text. The author also pays a deep gratitude to his Guru, Sri Kaivalyananda Yogi. He writes, "May my mind always want to become a bee to be at your lotus feet! May it always dance around your Lotus Feet!"

श्रीलक्ष्मीधरकविविरचितः अद्वैतमकरन्दः  
सहितं स्वयंप्रकाशकृतटीकासहितः एवम्  
रसाभिव्यञ्जिकाव्याख्यासहितः

अद्वैतमकरन्दस्य रसाभिव्यञ्जिका कृता । स्वयंप्रकाशयतिना पुरुषोत्तमशासनात्	॥ १॥
ब्रह्मानन्दरसास्वादमिच्छद्विबुधोत्तमैः । रसाभिव्यञ्जिका ह्येषा परिशील्या सदादरात्	॥ २॥
तापत्रयार्कसन्तप्ता मोक्षकामा मुदा सह । रसाभिव्यञ्जिकागङ्गामग्ना भवत सत्तमाः	॥ ३॥
व्याख्या प्रणीतच्छलमत्र बुद्धेर्ममापराधं विबुधाः क्षमन्ताम् । अम्बार्धदेहो भगवानतः स्याद्बालापराधात् पितृवत् प्रसन्नः	॥ ४॥
श्रीकैवल्यानन्दयोगीन्द्रपादपद्मद्वन्द्वे निःस्रवन्मोक्षसारे । शुद्धैर्हसैः सेविते सुप्रसन्ने मच्चेतोऽर्थी भृङ्गलीलां विधत्ताम्	॥ ५॥
चिदम्भोधिसम्मग्नचित्तं गुणानां सतामालयं शुद्धसत्त्वप्रधानम् । नृणां बोधयन्तं परब्रह्म तत्त्वं शिवानन्दयोगीन्द्रमीडे सदाहम्	॥ ६॥
सर्वज्ञचूडामणिमीश्वराणामीशानमिन्दीवरकोमलाङ्गम् । कारुण्यलावण्यसुधासमुद्रं श्रीजानकीजानिमहं भजामि	॥ ७॥
मन्दस्मितानन्दितभक्तजालं सौन्दर्यसन्तर्पितवामभागम् । स्वानन्दसन्तृप्तममन्दहासं साम्बं भजे चन्द्रकलावतंसम्	॥ ८॥

॥ इति श्रीमत्परमहंसपरिव्राजकाचार्यश्रीकैवल्यानन्दयोगीन्द्रपादकमल  
भृङ्गायमाणस्वयंप्रकाशाख्ययतिविरचिता  
रसाभिव्यञ्जिकाव्याख्याद्वैतमकरन्दव्याख्या समाप्ता ॥

Om Tat Sat!

\*\*\*\*\*

TABLE SUMMARISING THE PRATIJNYAS IN THIS TEXT

Verse No.	PRATIJNYA (HYPOTHESIS)	HETU (CAUSE) & YUKTI (THE LOGIC, PROOF)	DRISHTANTA (EXAMPLE)
1.	(Mangalacharan)		
2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Brahman Alone Am I, that is, I am Satchidananda, Pure Existence, Knowledge and Bliss Absolute.</i></li> </ul>	<p>Sat – I Ever Exist.</p> <p>Chit – and always I shine.</p> <p>Ananda – Never Do I Dislike Myself.</p>	
3.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>I am the Cause of All.</i></li> <li><i>I am the Knower of All.</i></li> </ul>	<p>World is superimposition on Me.</p> <p>I am not this limited mind but total mind.</p>	Snake on the <b>Rope</b> ; Castle in the <b>sky</b> . Mt. Meru, an unseen object.
4.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>I am Imperishable –</i></li> </ul>	<p>i) by myself – due to recollections.</p> <p>ii) by an external agent – I am partless.</p> <p>iii) by losing my support – I support all.</p>	<p>I have constant memory of <b>childhood</b>.</p> <p>Like <b>space</b>, it cannot be cut.</p> <p><b>Pot</b> can perish but not the <b>clay</b>.</p>
5.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>I cannot be dried, burnt, wetted, or cut.</i></li> </ul>	If space cannot be destroyed by elements equally real to it, how can the Self, more subtle, be destroyed by them?	<b>Space</b> is also like Self in this regard.
6.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>I am Omnipresent.</i></li> </ul>	The inert universe cannot be experienced unless my consciousness is there.	The <b>light from a bulb</b> illuminates the objects around it like consciousness.
7.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>I am Non-Dual, One without a Second.</i></li> <li><i>Consciousness reveals an object.</i></li> </ul>	<p>World is Superimposed on Me.</p> <p>Experience of inert world not possible without my consciousness.</p>	Rabbit's horns are not knowable as no one is conscious of them.
8.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>I am Not the BMI (body, mind, intellect).</i></li> </ul>	They are objects of 'my'-thought and 'this'-thought. I am their subject.	'My hunger', 'my nose', 'my anger' – these are not Me.
9.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>I am Sakshi, Not the Ego (Jiva).</i></li> </ul>	Ego is associated with modifications, limitations and afflictions; I am not.	Ego connects to relations by birth, profession, country, culture, etc.

Verse No.	PRATIJNYA (HYPOTHESIS)	HETU (CAUSE) & YUKTI (THE LOGIC, PROOF)	DRISHTANTA (EXAMPLE)
10.	• <i>Samsara Belongs to Ego.</i>	Sorrow etc, are not experienced in deep sleep; because Ego is not there.	Through blue goggles, the world appears blue. Blueness is not in the eyes.
11.	• <i>I am Witness of the Three States.</i>	Ego that sleeps does not know sleep. Atman never sleeps as it the Witness.	Ego says, "I had a good sleep; I did not know anything."
12.	• <i>The Three States Governed by Ego</i>	Ego's particular knowledge fluctuates from state to state; Self is constant in knowledge.	In sleep, ego's knowledge ceases completely as it is asleep.
13.	• <i>I Am Free from All Modifications.</i>	The Self is not born, does not age, does not decay, nor die.	
14.	• <i>I am Unchanging.</i>	If I also changed, I will not be able to recollect anything.	Pictures on a screen change, the screen remains unchanged.
15.	• <i>I am Neither Born, Nor Do I Die.</i>	Prior and posterior non-existence is of Jiva only, not Self.	
16.	• <i>I am Untouched by Ignorance.</i>	Because the Self is self-illuminated.	Like the clouds and the sun.
17.	• <i>Ignorance is Inexplicable.</i>	Lasts only till we make an enquiry.	Like a thick mist; only the rise of the sun of knowledge can dispel it.
18.	• <i>The Vedas are always valid.</i>	Vedas, even on Karma Kanda, are leading us to a higher Truth at every level.	A dream lion wakes us up to a higher reality. It serves this purpose.
19.	• <i>There is Unity in Diversity.</i>	Sentient and insentient are imagined in Brahman. Both are superimpositions.	A painting on the wall, of any objects, does not affect the wall..
20.	• <i>My Witness-hood is not Absolute</i>	Sakshi Bhava helps us to focus on thinning out our thoughts. After that it points to the Self.	

Verse No.	PRATIJNYA (HYPOTHESIS)	HETU (CAUSE) & YUKTI (THE LOGIC, PROOF)	DRISHTANTA (EXAMPLE)
21.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>I am not increased or decreased by Maya's projecting power.</i></li> <li><i>I am uncoloured by Maya's veiling power.</i></li> </ul>	<p>Because I am of the nature of eternity and infinity.</p> <p>Maya cause no attachment or delusion in Me.</p>	<p>Like the ocean unaffected by any number of unreal waves (projections).</p> <p>Like evening clouds on a crystal mountain.</p>
22.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Existence is My very nature, not one of My qualities.</i></li> </ul>	Existence is One, it cannot be classified into categories.	Like spateness is the nature of space.
23.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Consciousness is My very nature, not one of my qualities.</i></li> </ul>	If Consciousness were a quality, it will be a knowable object only.	
24.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Bliss is My very nature, not one of my qualities.</i></li> </ul>	<p>If different from me, it is not Bliss at all.</p> <p>If for Me, it would not be dear by Itself. If not for me, it would not be dear.</p>	One loves others because it is a source of happiness to oneself.
25.	•		
26.	•		
27.	•		
28.	•		

\*\*\*\*\*